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OCTOBER NO. 20

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THE ART OF GIL KANE

A study of the work of one of comics master artist. By Frank McGinty. Page 36

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FEATURE NEWS

MILLER LEAVES DAREDEVIL WITH A BANG

The current multi-issue storyline building in **DAREDEVIL** will come to a head in no. 190, which will wrap up all the plot threads Miller has been leaving open. This culmination will mark the end of Frank Miller's distinguished and highly-popular tenure on the series, as no. 191 is his last issue as writer/breakdown artist.

The mystery surrounding the revamped Black Widow and why she was poisoned will be revealed by the time the story ends in the double-sized no. 190, along with the other plot and sub-plot elements. The true story behind Stick, who taught Daredevil to use his powers, will come out, as will some astonishing revelations about the nature of Daredevil's hyper-senses. Heather Glenn will finally make up her mind whether or not to marry Matt, Kinigi returns, and the doings of the Hand will be explored. The title of the issue is "Resurrection", and the only thing Frank Miller will permit Marvel to say about that is "Elektra". Draw your own conclusions.

DAREDEVIL no. 191 will be Miller's last issue and last work for Marvel for the foreseeable future. He has been offered work on mini-series, graphic novels, and other projects, but so far has turned them down. He will, of course, still be producing RONIN as well as doing covers for DC.

With **DAREDEVIL no. 192,** the search for a new writer who can keep the audience Miller built up begins. Klaus Janson will continue to pencil and ink, and several writers will be tried out. Alan Brennert is scripting at least one issue, and Denny O'Neil is writing three. Archie Goodwin's name has come up as well as a possible successor, although Goodwin has not agreed to anything at this time.

BACKUPS NOT INCLUDED IN MARVEL ROYALTY SYSTEM

Marvel's royalty system, unlike DC's, pays royalties only on the cover feature. So, where DC's royalties are split proportionally between the lead feature and the back-up feature (if there is one), the creators of Marvel's backups get no extra money if the book sells well.

The only time a Marvel backup will receive royalties is if it is featured on the cover. This means, for example, that on **WHAT IF no. 35**, the features that qualify for royalty money are the lead feature "What if Elektra had Lived", by Frank Miller and Terry Austin, and "What if Yellowjacket had Died", by Alan Zelenatz, Greg LaRocque, and Mike Esposito. Roger Stern and Steve Ditko, writer and artist of "And Thus Are Born The Cat People", do not qualify for royalties no matter how the magazine sells.

MOENCH WALKS OUT ON MARVEL, SIENKIEWICZ QUITS REGULAR SERIES WORK

In a move that will take fandom by surprise, although apparently expected by everyone at **Marvel**, both Doug Moench and Bill Sienkiewicz have left **Marvel Comics** color line. While Bill Sienkiewicz will continue to do non-series special projects for **Marvel**, Moench has left the company entirely. Carol Kalish, Manager of Direct Sales for **Marvel Comics**, said that "Doug as well as a number of other creators had been formally approached by **DC** and by various editors at **DC** and various creators at **DC** ... the general reaction I am getting is that **DC** is obviously interested in our talent and Doug, for probably personal reasons of his own, ... had decided to pretty much to take up an offer with **DC**. I don't believe he's signed a contract yet and I don't know the terms of whatever offer he received."

Doug Moench made the initial decision to leave the **Moon Knight** title and that prompted the decision by Bill Sienkiewicz. "The timing pretty much hinged on the fact that as far as **Moon Knight** was concerned his association with the character had been entirely with Doug Moench. He felt, pretty much, that if Doug was leaving the series that this would be a good time to leave. Doug Moench's departure signalled Bill's leaving, "asserted Kalish. Apparently Bill Sienkiewicz had previously decided that he wanted to take the available offers for more lucrative work such as graphic novels and miniseries, offers he had previously refused due to the time demands of his regular series work. In addition, Sienkiewicz has other interests outside of comics such as expanding his repetoir of art styles (to include many styles of illustration not appropriate to superhero comics) and to pursue advertising art. As Dennis O'Neil, the **Moon Knight** editor said, Bill simply "wants to try other things."

While his separation with **Marvel** was not on the most amiable of terms, Moench, like the professional that he is, will wind up all of the loose story lines within his books before he leaves **Marvel**. While he will definitely conclude all of the current subplots which are ongoing in his various series he will immediately leave any title where he has been doing only one story single issues. Kalish, in summarizing the situation with Moench, went on to note that "a lot of people with contracts are drawing to a logical conclusion that this is a real good time to either renegotiate or to seriously discuss the possibility" of leaving a contractual situation. This is only the latest incident in a long series of creator movement between the various publishers of comic books, and when considered in conjunction with the appearance of several new publishers, it may presage a great deal of movement to come.

A FEW BITS OF LATE BREAKING NEWS

The Blue Devil, written by Mishkin and Cohn and illustrated by Peris Cullen, will be a new title from **DC** in 1983. The character is a special effects man for the movie industry who utilizes this experience and skill to fight crime.

According to Cat Yronwode, **Archie Comics** has been sold to RKO Pictures.

Two new **Marvel** series have been announced. **Cloak and Dagger**, the characters made popular through their appearances in **Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spiderman**, will appear in a series scripted by Bill Mantlo and drawn by Ed Hannigan. **The Eternals**, one of the many series created by Jack Kirby in his most recent stint at **Marvel**, will appear as a continuing backup series in **Thor**. While the scripter will be Peter Gillis no artist has yet been chosen.

Bruce Jones, the writer of such various titles as **Ka-Zar** and **Conan**, has moved to San Diego and will be scripting three bi-monthly titles for **Pacific Comics**.

Jack Kirby has a new book scheduled to be released by **Pacific Comics.** The title, **Silverstar**, will be published on a bi-monthly basis, to be issued in the alternate month from **Captain Victory.**

Steve Ringgenberg has been hired as Assistant Editor on **Amazing Heroes**. According to Kim Thompson, Ringgenberg will spend a brief period in that position and will then become full editor, replacing Dwight Decker. Ringgenberg previously worked as a messenger while freelancing for **DC Comics.**

NEMO — The Classic Comics Library, is a new bi-monthly title, published by Fantagraphics and scheduled to begin release in January 1983. The title will be edited by Richard Marschall and will feature a combination of strip reprints, interviews with comic strip creators, and articles on comic strips. The book will be $2.95, run sixty-four pages, and be printed on white paper.

Prince Valiant — An American Epic is the newest release of Manuscript Press. Coming closely on the heels of the unfortunate demise of one of our greatest comic strip artists, this book serves as a worthwhile tribute to some of Foster's greatest and earliest professional work. Hal Foster is here represented by his first 46 strips in full color as well as four pages of never before published artwork. The book is available for $100 from Manuscript Press, P.O. Box 1762, Wayne, NJ 07470.

RED SONJA

RED SONJA's new costume, the main reason for the delay, is depicted below. The creative team is ROY THOMAS [writer], TONY DeZUNIGA and ERNIE COLON [pencils], with MEL CANDIDO assuming the inking chores instead of BOB WIACEK.

IN THE WORKS AT EPIC ILLUSTRATED

Marvel has announced that it will be featuring the work of Go Nagai, one of Japan's most renowned comics artists. In Japan, Nagai is known as the creator of many popular comics series as well as animated series; among them, **DEVIL MAN** and **VIOLENCE JACK**. Some of his work has reached American television and is broadcast in edited and translated form as **THE STAR-VENGERS** and **GRANDIZER**. Both of these are part of the syndicated **FORCE FIVE** program, in case anyone wants to track Nagai's work down. So far, Nagai has done two pieces for **EPIC**, a full-color one page illustration of "a sort of cosmic Atlas", according to Assistant Editor Mary Jo Duffy, and a ten-page black and white comics story which has not seen print before in any country. The story is entitled "Oni", which is Japanese for demon, and it is the story of a demon and the man who battles it. It is a self-contained story, but it is open-ended enough that it could easily be turned into a series if Nagai is interested--EPIC certainly is. Note: In the excerpts printed here, the script is pencilled in Japanese. It has been translated and will be lettered in English when the story appears in **EPIC**.

Also in preparation for **EPIC** is a series entitled "Fancy", created by writer Mary Jo Duffy and artist John Romita Jr. This series will be somewhat more whimsical than the usual fantasy fare, as might be expected from Duffy. It centers around a band of adventurers led by Moxie, a green, winged young lady who is driven by lofty goals--she wants to have a fabulous amount of money. Accompanying Moxie are Fred who is mostly mouth, arms, and cigar, and Rufus who has been a failure as a sorcerer's apprentice and now would like to try his hand at being a mighty warrior/thief. "Fancy" will not be a series in the traditional sense with tight continuity between chapters, but will consist of short, self-contained stories appearing sporadically in EPIC. The first of these relates Rufus's first encounter with Moxie and Fred, and his joining the band. Rufus sees Moxie as very attractive and would like to get much closer to her and as a result, does whatever Moxie tells him. Moxie sees Rufus as a three-way split instead of a two-way one, and the story continues from there. The series will be in full color and will be inked by Romita Jr. as well as drawn by him.

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EPIC COMICS GROUP TO DEBUT IN OCTOBER - SECOND TITLE PLANNED

October will see the release of **DREADSTAR no. 1**, the first title to appear under the **EPIC COMICS GROUP** masthead. EPIC COMICS, although staffed by Marvel personnel and distributed through Marvel distribution channels, has been formed as a separate company. The Editor-in-Chief is Archie Goodwin, and his Associate Editor is Mary Jo Duffy. Goodwin and Duffy are also, of course, the editorial team on Marvel's **EPIC ILLUSTRATED** as well. Though the **EPIC COMICS GROUP** is currently small enough for Goodwin and Duffy to handle themselves, more editorial staff is planned as the line expands.

DREADSTAR is 32 pages, bi-monthly, printed on heavy stock paper in color (similar to Marvel's "Star-Lord" package), and will retail for $1.50. **DREADSTAR** is written, drawn, and inked by Jim Starlin, and concerns the adventures of Vance Dreadstar, first introduced in Starlin's "Metamorphosis Oddyssey" series in **EPIC ILLUSTRATED**, and featured in **THE PRICE**, published by Eclipse Enterprises, and **DREADSTAR**, the Marvel Graphic Novel. The reason **DREADSTAR** is such a major development that it required a new company to be formed to handle it, is that the creators retain ownership of their concepts under the **EPIC COMICS** system, unlike at Marvel where the company would assume ownership. Thus, Jim Starlin is only licensing his characters to **EPIC COMICS**. Once the contract has run its course, Starlin is free to either renegotiate another contract with **EPIC COMICS** or with someone else, or decide to discontinue the series.

EPIC COMICS contracts are negotiated for a period of six issues, so **DREADSTAR** will at least run through no. 6. For those concerned about the series ending, no. 6 will end with a story resolution. If **DREADSTAR** were to run only six issues, it would function as a complete work. If Starlin and EPIC decide to run the series past no. 6, a new contract for six more issues will be negotiated.

In addition to **DREADSTAR**, contracts have been signed for a second title in the **EPIC COMICS GROUP**. Steve Englehart and Steve Leialoha have agreed to produce at least six issues of **THE COYOTE** for EPIC. **THE COYOTE** series was begun in **ECLIPSE MAGAZINE**, by Englehart and Marshall Rogers, but Rogers has left the project and Steve Leialoha will be drawing it for the EPIC series. Archie Goodwin and Mary Jo Duffy are reportedly very happy with Leialoha's character designs, and expect the series to be visually spectacular. After the first six issues of **THE COYOTE**, a Marvel Graphic Novel is planned, by the same team, featuring the character.

Feature News Preview

The New Mutants, the X-Men and more - a talk with Chris Claremont.

PEOPLE WERE NOTHING TO TRAN, MERE PUPPETS. I DO NOT WISH TO BECOME LIKE HIM--YET I FEEL THE SAME TEMPTATION WITHIN MYSELF.
HELP ME PROFESSOR. TEACH ME WHAT I MUST KNOW.
I...
I... CANNOT.
WILL NOT, Y'MEAN. ARE YOU AFRAID, CHARLEY?
I AM TIRED, MOIRA. OF GATHERING YOUNG PEOPLE--CHILDREN--OF TRAINING THEM, ONLY TO SEND THEM TO THEIR DEATHS. THERE'S TOO MUCH BLOOD ON MY HANDS ALREADY.
I WANT NO MORE.

With **The New Mutants** premiering as a graphic novel and then becoming a regular series, a new artist taking over **The X-Men**, and the **Wolverine** mini-series enjoying such popularity, **The X-Men** and its various spinoffs are making waves. **Comics Feature** contacted Chris Claremont to gain some inside reaction on all of the upcoming changes.

The New Mutants, Claremont emphasizes, is not a new team of X-Men, but is a separate series with a separate direction. It begins in the graphic novel, when, according to Claremont, "Professor Xavier finds himself in a position where circumstances force him to go looking for mutants once more." The mutants gathered will all be under 18 years old, which will bring the series "back to the original concept of the X-Men," Claremont says. In the first twenty or so issues of **The X-Men**, the emphasis was more on Xavier's teaching the young mutants to deal with their powers and their status as mutants. This concept had faded over the years, as the mutants in the X-Men grew older and more capable, until their major concerns had little to do with the school. **The New Mutants** will "run the full gamut of teenage chaos," from slumber parties to teenage rebellion, something Xavier has never really had to deal with before.

As to who the New Mutants are—the membership starts with five young mutants. The first is Karma, a Vietnamese refugee who first showed up in **Marvel Team-Up #100**. Claremont defines her power as "the ability to take control of people's minds and bodies" and adds that she will be the team's unofficial deputy leader, under Xavier. Cannonball, from Kentucky, is capable of generating an electromagnetic process "which propels him through the air like a cannonball or missile. "However," mentions Claremont, "his big problem right now is stopping. Turning is also difficult." Psyche, the third member, is what Claremont calls a "specific telepath." She can communicate empathically with animals, but her major power is to define an opponent's greatest fear, or greatest desire, and project a convincing illusion of it. Sunspot, a young Brazilian mutant, "absorbs the kinetic energy of the sun, and turns it into strength." His trouble is that he "tends to run out of gas quickly—he'd be more effective at noon in a desert than in the middle of the night and underground." The New Mutant's final member is the Scottish "Wolfbane". She can change from human form to wolf form, or halt at a "transitional form which combines lupine strength and agility with human dexterity."

This team, however, will not remain constant. Some of them will remain in the team, some might "Become villains, some might lose their powers, some might die, some might go to Emma Frost's Massachusetts Academy for Nasty Mutants," and new and different young mutants will be introduced, to keep the New Mutants constantly fresh. The series' major villains will be The Hellfire Club, since their goal "rather than to teach mutants to use their powers for the benefit of mankind, as Xavier does, is to teach mutants to use their powers for the benefit of themselves."

Continuity between **The New Mutants** and **The X-Men** will be fairly strong, as might be expected. "After all they live in the same place," Claremont points out, "with the New Mutants in one wing, and the X-Men

in the other." There will not be continuity between stories, with a plotline beginning in **The New Mutants** and ending in **The X-Men**, but the characters will meet a lot.

Claremont calls Bob McLeod's art "absolutely stunning," and adds that he "found it a very pleasant surprise, very easy to write." With McLeod's background as a slick inker, Claremont did not expect to get solid, direct storytelling such as McLeod delivered. McLeod remains regular artist on the series, and Claremont looks forward to the continuing collaboretion.

Another new artist Claremont is working with is Paul Smith, who has just assumed the pencilling chores on **The X-Men**. Smith takes over as of #165. Claremont says Smith's pencils are "a lot of fun, and his storytelling is nifty." Claremont expects Smith to "more than carry on the standards that Dave and John have set." The new penciller will not have much effect on **The X-Men's** plotline for a while, both because Claremont already has a rough idea of where the book was heading for the next five or six issues after Smith takes over, and because Smith is content to follow Claremont's lead for a while, until he gets used to the characters. Still, Claremont expects Smith to have some plot impact on the series. "Just as it was with Dave and John, a joint approach will evolve, out of his and my conceptions and ideas," Claremont says. "We've already had a couple of knock-down drag-out arguments about a few of the characters. That's good, because without their creative tension, the series would lose its energy."

Dave Cockrum's last issue on the book,#164, will introduce a new incarnation for Carol Danvers, a.k.a. Ms. Marvel. Claremont sees this as "a happy ending to the saga" of Ms. Marvel. Carol will be mutated by the Sleazoids into the evolutionary ultimate state for the human/Kree synthesis that she is. In the process, she gains what Claremont terms a "symbiotic relationship with a white hole," which gives her super-powers once more, among them the abilities to travel through and survive in outer space. Since her mutation makes her for all intents and purposes a mutant, she will be offered the chance to join the X-Men, but will turn it down in order to stay in space, which according to Claremont has been her fondest wish since she was a child.

The **Wolverine** mini-series, although it has been enjoying tremendous sales, "has been getting no mail," according to Claremont. When asked about plans to make the **Wolverine** book a regular series rather than a limited series, he says it would be "a lovely idea, provided Frank Miller drew it, which isn't likely—and without Frank, I don't see the point." Such a series would either gut **The X-Men**, by depriving them of their most popular member, or strain credibility by having a nasty Wolverine roaming Japan in one series while a nicer version travelled with the X-Men in another. It would also put too much of a strain on Claremont's schedule, since handling **The X-Men** and **The New Mutants** regularly, plus special projects, is all he wants to handle at the moment.

KARMA [Xi'an Coy Manh] - At 18, she is the oldest member of the new team. She has the ability to "possess" others, bending them to her will.

CANNONBALL [Sam Guthrie] - A thoughtful, conscientious 16-year-old Appalachian, Sam is education-hungry. He is able to induce a chemical reaction in his body that causes him to take off like a rocket.

PSYCHE [Danielle Moonstar] - A 15-year-old Cheyenne girl. She is proud but shy, and distrustful of the white man. She can take the darkest fears of her enemies and turn them back upon them.

SUNSPOT [Robert da Costa] - This 14-year-old Portuguese lad is a human solar receptor. He is capable of transforming solar rays into physical strength.

WOLFBANE [Rahne Sinclair] - A 14-year-old orphan from Scotland. She is capable of transforming herself into a wolf or into a half-human/half-wolf form. She considers this ability more curse than gift.

MARVEL NEWS TIDBITS

John Byrne has taken himself off THE ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES as writer/artist. Denny O'Neil replaces him as writer, but no artist has as yet been chosen. John Severin has been approached, but is reportedly too busy to handle a monthly comic book.

Gene Day has done breakdowns for an issue of STAR WARS, to be finished by Tom Palmer. There has been talk of Day taking over the series now that Walt Simonson has left it. It is also possible that Tom Palmer may pencil STAR WARS as well as ink it, but nothing has been decided as yet.

The contents for EPIC no. 15 have been set, although changes may be made between now and press time. There is a cover by Boris Vallejo as well as an interview with the noted fantasy painter. A new series entitled "The Last of the Dragons" will begin. It is plotted and pencilled by Carol Potts, scripted by Denny O'Neil, and inked by Terry Austin. The series will run six 8-page installments. Bob Aull's "Patriot" will appear, as will the second chapter of "The Llehs", by Graham Marks and John Bolton. There will be another installment of "Abraxis and the Earthman", by Rick Veitch, and a piece called "Arise Awake", by Marc Hempel, whose work has appeared in ECLIPSE and RBCC, previously. There will also be work by Jim Starlin; a story which will function as a bridge between the "Dreadstar" novel and the first issue of "Dreadstar" in the Epic Comics Line. Along with this, there will be a preview feature on the Epic Comics Line itself.

Mary Jo Duffy's fill-in story in POWER MAN/IRON FIST will be a one-issue version of the Luke Cage epic/head trip she would have done had she remained on the book. Cage is sent to prison again and must face confinement after being on the run for so long and then finally acquitted as well as

meeting up with some people he helped put behind bars. Cage's partner, Iron Fist, will go through some disillusionment as he sees the American legal system put his friend and partner, whom he knows to be innocent, in jail.

The new Captain Marvel will break the expected mold by being both female and black, and will make her debut in SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL no. 16. The new character's first appearance will be by Roger Stern, John Romita Junior and longtime Spider-Man artist John Romita, who will ink his son's pencils.

X-MEN no. 166 will be a double-sized issue, featuring the mutant team's showdown with The Sleazoids. The series' next double-sized story will be in no. 175 which is two months after the twentieth anniversary of X-MEN no. 1. The decision was made to delay the anniversary so the double-sized book would be an impressive issue number.

According to reports from Marvel, KA-ZAR dies in KA-ZAR no. 21. The title of no. 22 is "Shanna The Savage". If this is true, it will be the first time a lead character has died in his own series--without that series being cancelled.

After the 250th issue of THE FANTASTIC FOUR, the team will explore the Negative Zone, spending five or six issues travelling around in the bizarre dimension; something Reed Richards has wanted to do since he first discovered the Zone back in the sixties. Trouble is, while the FF are in the Negative Zone, Annihilus comes to Earth, where he does what comes naturally to evil insectoid gestalt intelligences.

Franklin Richards is due to be seriously injured--not permanently crippled or anything, but injured--in an all-out battle in the Baxter Building. This will cause Reed and Sue to consider that perhaps their headquarters isn't a safe place for a child to grow up.

The two will move to a small town (within commuting distance of Manhattan, of course) and adopt secret identities in order to give Franklin a normal childhood. This will not last, as any villains who might manage to track the Fantasticouple will pose a major threat to both Franklin and the defenseless town.

Also upcoming in the FANTASTIC FOUR is a storyline featuring survivors of planets recently consumed by Galactus, who come to Earth to demand of Reed Richards an explanation for why he saved Galactus' cosmic life, thus allowing him to murder billions.

There is serious talk of a FANTASTIC FOUR graphic novel to be written, drawn, and inked by John Byrne. Among other things, the proposed novel would reveal the source of Reed Richards' fortune. Even before his patent sales, the FF's leader always seemed remarkably well-heeled.

John Byrne has taken over MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE as writer. Ron Wilson will remain as penciller. This will bring the continuity of TWO-IN-ONE more in line with its parent title, in keeping with Marvel's policy to have no magzines that are by nature "secondary titles". To further aid this, all major developments in the life of Ben Grimm will now happen in the pages of TWO-IN-ONE: It is also possible that TWO-IN-ONE no. 100 will be the last issue, to be followed on the schedule by THE THING no. 1.

MARVEL TEAM-UP is beginning a back-up series as a showplace for testing out and developing new talent. Five or six pages an issue will be devoted to non-Spider-Man team-ups, to be written and/or drawn by newcomers to Marvel. Tom DeFalco, regular editor of TEAM-UP, will be editing this series as well.

There are wedding plans in the future for two X-Men. This will be in two separate weddings, as both characters are male—and their brides will not be mutants. There will be some team re-organization as well, as one of these characters leaves the team temporarily and the other more or less permanently.

Ed Hannigan has given up the art chores on PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN. Al

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Milgrom takes over.

Spider-Man will be teaming up with the Leap-Frog in his new heroic [?] incarnation in an up and coming issue of MARVEL TEAM-UP.

The next Marvel Graphic Novel, featuring the debut of THE NEW MUTANTS, is expected to be delayed.

Two more Marvel reprint packages have been announced. Both will be in the "Star-Lord" format, with good paper and heavier covers (and better printing, to boot). The first will center on Conan, reprinting "Red Nails" in its entirety, along with an article by Alan Zelenetz, and a poem illustrated by Barry Smith. The cover will be by Smith. The second reprint package will reprint GIANT SIZED X-MEN no. 1, along with a new story by Claremont and Paul Smith, featuring Kitty Pride's birthday party and a tour of Xavier's mansion.

Brynocki reappears in MASTER OF KUNG FU no. 119.

After Paul Smith's one-and-only issue of DR. STRANGE [no. 56], there will be an issue drawn by newcomer Kevin Nowlan, after which Dan Green becomes the regular penciller. Green may ink the book as well, unless Terry Austin elects to remain with the series.

The RED SONJA mini-series has been taken off the schedule temporarily due to deadline trouble. The Howard Estate demanded that Sonja's costume be changed and Marvel needs more time to first design a new outfit and then make the necessary art changes.

This year's AVENGERS ANNUAL, as well as pitting the Avengers against the Defenders, will print for ambitious fans, the Avengers Charter and By-Laws. See if you qualify!

THE ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES no. 1 has been delayed. It will now ship in mid-September, and be on the stands around the end of the month.

Shang-Chi, Master of Kung Fu, guest-stars in ROM no. 38 as Rom hunts down British Wraiths who engage in games of deceit and death.

Marvel has announced THE MARVEL NO-PRIZE book, a 32-page, no ads, direct-sales only one shot which will feature Stan Lee [as written by Jim Owlsley] waxing nostalgic about Marvel's best-loved goof-ups. The example they give is of the time Captain America said, "Only one of us will leave this room alive - and it won't be me!". Watch for it in October. Mike Golden will do the cover.

Another odd new title from Marvel: THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE, a twelve-issue monthly limited series which will contain specifications on virtually every Marvel hero. Each issue will run 32 pages and sell for $1.00.

Feature News Preview

The Legend Returns - Mike Barr talks about Camelot 3000.

Camelot 3000 is DC Comics' first direct sales only series, and they are entering that market ostentatiously; the twelve-issue monthly series is being printed on Baxter stock, similar to **Marvel Fanfare**, and will retail at $1.00. In format, it will be otherwise like any other DC comic; 32 pages long, with 25 editorial pages, including story and letters page, with the remainder used for ads. **Comics Feature** asked Mike Barr, writer of **Camelot 3000**, how the project came about. "When I was working as an editor for DC," he answered, "we were considering ideas for a maxi-series, which as proposed then would be just like a mini-series, only bigger. The mini-series at that time were doing quite well, and we thought there might be a market for a longer one, something that might take up an entire year." Since Barr was also working as a freelance writer for DC, he submitted a story proposal for this maxi-series, and it was approved by Dick Giordano and Jenette Kahn. At that time, however, the series was planned to be printed like a normal comic book. "It was not suggested to do it on good paper," Barr notes, "until some time after the pencils for the first issue came in, and everyone was standing around oohing and aahhing over this marvelous work that Brian Bolland had done." To target the book more toward the fan audience, the decision was made to distribute it through direct sales outlets only. From there, the decisions to make the project even more special came naturally, until the book stands as it is now set to be released next month.

When asked to describe the series, Barr says, "What **Camelot 3000** is a space fantasy sequel to the Arthurian legend. The legends tell that King Arthur will return at the time of England's greatest need-and this is it and he has." As the series begins, Earth is "getting the bejeebers beaten out of it" by an alien armada. King Arthur is freed from a mystic state of suspended animation, and sets about rebuilding the Round Table to face the threat. Arthur is needed, says Barr, because "these aliens come and unitedly assault this very un-united Earth, and so Arthur's job is to unite the planet in defense." Arthur has the aid of Merlin, who has been similarly stashed away, and certain of the Knights of the Round Table--sort of. With the exception of King Arthur and Merlin, and Tom Prentice, a normal human, "all the other knights, and all the other villains and other characters are all reincarnated" from the characters who played roles in the Arthurian legends.

"The characters are being introduced over the first three or four issues," says Barr. The first issue introduces Arthur and Merlin, as well as Tom Prentice, and features cameo appearances by Jules Futrelle and Commander Joan Action, who will be revealed as the reincarnated Lancelot and Guinivere in the second issue. The third issue introduces the other six knights.

The character of King Arthur is very central to the series, of course, and his reaction to the world of 3000A.D. must be in keeping with both his background and his bearing as a king. "In one way he's taking this all matter-of-factly," says Barr, "because he believes in Merlin's power, he believes the legend that says he was supposed to come back at the time of England's greatest need, but he kind of marvels off and on at this really strange world that he's awakened in." Arthur "has seen a lot of strange things, odd creatures, before," Barr notes, so he is able to accept the situation he finds himself in without much trouble.

In contrast to the likable Arthur, however, Barr describes Merlin as "very standoffish," and "in many ways a real son of a bitch. Essentially, the only person he talks to is Arthur, and Tom and the rest of the knights he really doesn't have any use for. Merlin doesn't care what other

people want--what people want, period. He knows what he wants to do, and goes through other people, if he has to, to do it. Especially, he and Lancelot don't get along at all. Because Lancelot is very noble, kind of 'God's knight,' and Merlin is the son of the devil. And Lancelot can't help but take all this stuff personally."

Jules Futrelle, the man who becomes 3000 A.D.'s Lancelot Du Lac, is "essentially the bankroller of all this stuff. He's a wealthy industrialist, and he is the one who is technically the owner of New Camelot, which is the base they operate out of." As Lancelot, Futrelle is "also second in command--he's the leader of the knights when Arthur is not around, because everyone recognizes his prowess as the best of Arthur's knights."

Camelot 3000's Guinivere is Commander Joan Action, a "high official in this vaguely defined defense system that Earth has in the future." Her rank as Commander and her reincarnation as Guinivere leave her with "dual commitment all the way through, both as a member of the 'Camelot' cast, and as an official who is committed to the safety of Earth--so she can't let her feelings for all those guys get in the way of her duty." However, for all her attention to duty, she is still Guinivere, the pivotal member of the tragic love triangle that tore Camelot apart in the original legends, and ended the age of chivalry. With Camelot's return, fate begins to play the same pattern over again.

The only one who notices this is Tom Prentice, the only member of the cast who has nothing to do with the original Camelot. As such, he is "the viewpoint character for the series, and is also kind of a Greek chorus, because he knows what happened before, in that in the original legends of Camelot, he knows how the downfall of the Round Table came about, because of the triangle with Arthur and Guinivere and Lancelot." Tom tries to keep history (or legend) from repeating itself, and "whether he has any sense or not" to try to prevent this "is hard to say, because these three characters are entwined in this destiny, and they have to live it out whether they want to or not."

Even the invading aliens are somehow related to the Arthurian legends. Just how Barr will not say, though he does promise that **Camelot 3000** #5 "will be the big alien background issue," which will reveal how the aliens fit into the frame of destiny.

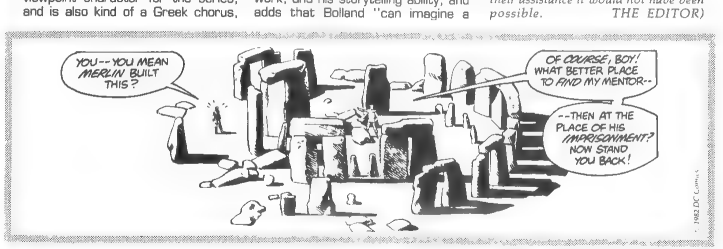
Camelot 3000 is written in the full-script format, and though the storyline is planned out through all twelve issues, it is only roughly planned, to leave Barr free to plot out character and action scenes as he writes each issue. "I have a direction, so I don't just meander, but it's not like sitting down and transcribing notes--I know where I'm going, but it's fresh at the same time."

Barr is also trying to accentuate the visual in **Camelot 3000**, which is fitting, considering the printing values. "I'm trying to rely more on the pictures to tell the story," he says, "and I am completely confident of Brian's ability to draw whatever I ask him to --within reason, of course." Of artist Brian Bolland's work, he says, "The real wizard of **Camelot 3000** is not Merlin, it's Brian Bolland. He draws better than almost anyone else I can think of." Barr praises Bolland's expressive facial and figure work, and his storytelling ability, and adds that Bolland "can imagine a world of the future that is familiar enough that the readers can identify with it, and yet it's really alien and spooky in a lot of ways."

Bruce Patterson, the inker of **Camelot 3000**, was not the first choice. "The best inker for the project--and this is not taking anything away from Bruce--would be Brian himself," Barr points out, "but Brian simply cannot produce 23 pages of pencilled and inked artwork a month." Since the project was to be monthly, DC had to find a qualified inker. "We went through a whole list of potential inkers," Barr relates, "and got samples from a lot of different people, and Bruce is the one who did the best work." Barr is quite pleased with the choice, stating that "Bruce is doing a very good job on the book."

In terms of publishing and marketing, **Camelot 3000** is a big step for DC, but as far as the creative end goes, Barr does not see the series as anything particularly new. "What I'm trying to do that is different," he says, "is to make it a comic book that is well done. I don't think there are enough of those around today." Emphasizing traditional values of craft and entertainment, he feels, is easily as important as new methods of storytelling or characterization. "It's quite enough for a comic book to be simply a well-done comic book...and if **Camelot** is that, then I'll be enormously pleased with it."

(Elsewhere in this issue you will find a preview review of this book. We wish to take this opportunity to publicly thank DC Comics, Mike Barr and Mike Flynn for their tremendous cooperation in this effort. Without their assistance it would not have been possible. THE EDITOR)


YOU--YOU MEAN MERLIN BUILT THIS?
OF COURSE, BOY! WHAT BETTER PLACE TO FIND MY MENTOR--
--THEN AT THE PLACE OF HIS IMPRISONMENT? NOW STAND YOU BACK!
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DC NEWS TIDBITS

JUSTICE LEAGUE no. 210-212 will contain a three-part story by Rich Buckler, scripted by Gerry Conway, which was done for a tabloid some time ago and has been shelved ever since. No. 213 will be by Don Heck once more. Due to the three-month fill-in, Heck found himself with time on his hands and inked no. 209.

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES no. 300 will solve the dilemma posed by the "Adult Legion" stories--that of the readers knowing which of the Legionnaires will live, die, marry or what have you. It is to be revealed that there are a number of Legions in a number of possible futures, and the Adult Legion inhabits only one (or maybe more) of them. So for convenience's sake, these continuums have been divided up by artist. Thus, the Dave Cockrum Legion is not the same as the Curt Swan Legion is not the same as the John Forte Legion is not the same as--and so on. Incidentally, this frees the current "Giffen" Legion from the years of continuity established by the other artists. This may explain why Element Lad's Orphan Annie hairdo has gone unremarked on by the other Legionnaires who were accustomed to seeing him in a much different style.

TALES OF THE BIZARRO WORLD, the mini-series devoted to the Morons of Mayhem, has been indefinitely delayed due to the lack of an artist. However, there will be a Bizarro story written by Cary Bates in an upcoming SUPERMAN to satisfy everyone's appetite for the crystalline clods.

Due to Marv Wolfman's workload, several issues of ACTION during the Lord Satanis/split Superman continuity will be either written by someone else or scripted over Marv's plot. Most of this will be handled by Mike Barr. The basic plotting on this serial has been done already by Wolfman, and Barr will be moving the story along according to Marv's plan.

Upcoming in DC PRESENTS will be a Superman/House of Mystery team-up, as well as a Superman/Atomic Knights team-up which will firmly establish that The Atomic Knights are not truly a part of the DC timeline; although according to E. Nelson Bridwell, Gardner Grayle is a part of Earth-One continuity and this story will show just how.

After the current serial in ACTION is completed, regular continuity between ACTION and SUPERMAN will begin; much like the continuity that runs between BATMAN and DETECTIVE. It will be mostly limited to sub-plots, however, since the two series have different writers. In order to create room for this added characterization material, the back-up features will be dropped from ACTION and SUPERMAN.

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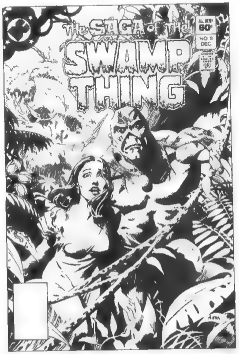
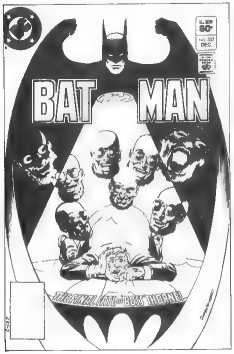
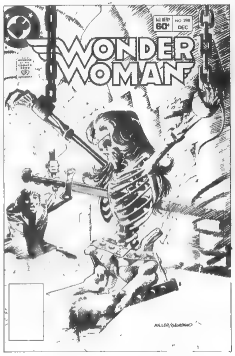


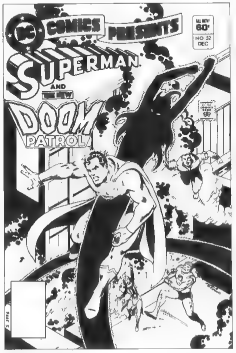




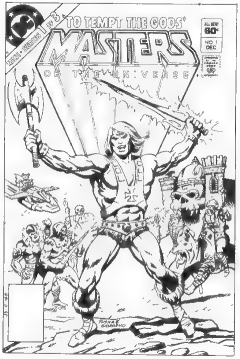
There will be a crossover between SUPERMAN and SUPERBOY, written by Cary Bates (the Superman half) and Paul Kupperberg (the Superboy half). It involves what happens when Superman and Superboy are both caught in a time-storm and switch minds. Superboy's mind in Superman's body has to deal with life at WGBS and adult life as Clark, without really knowing how to go about it—while confronting the fact that he's more attracted to Lana Lang than Lois Lane. Meanwhile, Superman's mind in Superboy's body has been thrust back into his boyhood and has to deal with his foster parents still being alive.

Beginning with FLASH no. 318, the new back-up feature will be "The Creeper". Written by Carl Gafford and drawn by Dave Gibbons (whose work has been seen in the states in Marvel's DR. WHO reprints), the series starts off by moving the Creeper to Boston and getting him wanted by the police.

Big changes are afoot for the Flash .... series editor Ernie Colon is very cagey about what is coming up, but according to him, it is "something that has never happened to any comic book hero before". While many heroes have been wanted by the police, The Flash will actually be guilty of the crime they want him for! And that, according to Colon, is just the beginning.



Ernie Colon, editor of GREEN LANTERN, has been using the "Tales of the Green Lantern Corps" feature as an avenue for trying out new talent. Of those who have done work for the series, Colon is confident that he has unearthed some solid new talents; among them Richard Howell, Jerome Moore, Chuck Patton, and Kurt Busiek.



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The justice league avengers team-up, set for Summer '83, will be pencilled by George Perez. It will most likely be scripted by Gerry Conway and Roy Thomas.

ACTION no. 537 will be pencilled by Irv Novick, to give Curt Swan time to get back on schedule after the various extra projects he's been doing. The issue introduces the villain Jackhammer.

It is reported that Margot Kidder will be appearing in SUPERMAN III, but in order to hedge their bets, the producers have added Lana Lang to the storyline so that in the event they lose Lois, they still have a romantic interest on tap. Does this mean we'll be seeing stories like there were in the 1960's LOIS LANE??

One of the "new talents" discovered by Ernie Colon for the "Green Lantern Corps" feature, Jerome Moore, is the new artist on FIRESTORM.

Ed Hannigan will be doing some covers for DC, among them WONDER WOMAN no. 300.

Upcoming in Marvel's Graphic Novel series is a Spider-Man novel drawn by Mike Golden.

Tom DeFalco is now permanent editor of THE FANTASTIC FOUR and MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE.

Bob Layton has given up the writer's assignment on POWER MAN AND IRON FIST, without ever writing an issue. No replacement has been chosen yet, although various fill-ins are in the works.

As well as doing covers for DC, Ed Hannigan may be working on a mini-series, possibly featuring Cloak and Dagger - the anti-hero pair who have been crossing Spider-Man's path in recent issues.

Alex Toth has at least pencilled a Superman and Batman story, which is presumably being released on the European market, but not in the United States.

Alex Toth is drawing a new series for Warren. Entitled "Torpedo", it premiered in VAMPIRELLA no. 108, and is about a professional killer in the late 1930's/early 1940's. The first three or four chapters are being drawn by Toth, after which another artist will take over the series.

ALTERNATIVE NEWS

Mail response on THE GOBLIN no. 1 was heavier than Warren expected, and was quite a positive reaction. The story that got the most mail was the "Troll Patrol" color insert by Mike Golden and Rudy Nebres. Other color inserts in the works are "Starlad", by Vic Catan, to appear in EERIE no. 136, and "Haggarth", currently being drawn by Victor De La Fuente.

Charlton Bullseye has been cancelled due to low sales. Charlton is currently looking for a publisher who will take over the publishing of the hundreds of pages of BULLSEYE material they have in stock. It is possible that Bill Black of Paragon Publications, may become the new publisher for this material. This leaves Charlton as an all-reprint line once more.

Oddball Comics, a quality trade paperback, is slated for publication during the last quarter of 1983. The book is being assembled by Scott Shaw! and will offer a words-and-pictures survey of the most unusual comics ever to see print. The material will be accompanied by running commentary by the editor. The book is an extension of the famous "Esoteric Comics" slideshow previously presented at conventions throughout the country by Shaw! Twisted Tales, a new title written and edited by Bruce Jones is also on the Pacific Comics schedule. The title will feature several short stories devoted to telling tales of macabre horror and will feature the artwork of Bill Stout, Dave Stevens, Rich Corben and Howard Nostrand. The cover for the first issue is by Corben. The book will be published on Baxter stock, in the format now made famous by Marvel Comics. Still another title, Elric, based on the character created by Michael Moorcock, packaged by Mike Friedrich, and written by Roy Thomas will appear with breakdowns by Craig Russell and finished pencil by Michael Gilbert. Russell will also ink. The book, also to appear on Baxter stock, will chronicle the tales of Elric in chronological order devoting approximately six issues per novel. As expected, Ms. Mystic is delayed as Neal Adams has completed only five pages.

A new Hembeck is on the schedule, this one to be called Dial H For Hembeck, and retailing for $1.95. This, the seventh in the series, will be one half reprint and one half new material.

Fantaco's Chronicles Series Annual #1 will be presented as a 96 page package for $2.50. It will contain a revised and updated version of Two Decades of Comics, a fan project previously published only in Britain and with little U.S. distribution. The book, originally published by Slings and Arrows, will present a brief description of virtually every superhero character

to appear in comics in Britain or the U.S. from 1960 to the present. New artwork for the Fantaco edition is by Byrne, Vess, Kaluta, Robbins, Sinnott, Hembeck, Vezina, and others. The cover is by Neal Adams C.

Nexus will be the first color comic to be released by Capital Comics. The book which will be numbered Volume II, #1 is due for release this fall and will probably be a 32-page, color comic on white paper for $1.50. The usual team, Mike Baron and Steve Rude, will create the story and art with a colorist yet to be chosen. Frequency will be bi-monthly. There will be a minimum of six issues. A Nexus portfolio is also planned. Limited to an edition of 2000, the plates will be signed and numbered by artist Steve Rude. There will be six plates in an illustrated envelope.

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Fantagraphics, the publishers of the Comics Journal, will be releasing several additional book titles. Included among these are Hugo, a book about a cat by Milton Knight Jr., Dalgoda, a book about a dog by Jan Strand and Dennis Fujitake, and the second issue of Love and Rockets, a very unusual book by the Hernandez brothers. The Shadow, a book about the famous pulp character to be written and drawn by Mike Kaluta remains on the schedule, for the third year. The Survivors, a series by Belgian cartoonist "Hermann" will be reprinted in an American edition. The book will be 48 pages plus covers and will be printed on high quality stock, squarebound for a retail price of $4.95. Release is planned for September.

Red Circle, an abortive attempt by Archie Comics to re-enter the super-hero field several years ago failed after the release of only two titles - Super-cops and Sabrina's Tales of Sorcerory. Now, under new editor John Carbonaro, the company plans on trying once again. Several characters are planned for revival including The Fly, in his original incarnation and without FlyGirl, the Shield, all three versions, the Black Hood, in his Neal Adams designed incarnation, and Hangman, in a return to the Batman-type character of the 1940s. The first release by the company will be The Mighty Crusaders reactivating the superteam of the 1960s although this time as a straight superhero adventure series without the strong campy overtones of the original series. Richard Buckler will be the penciller. There is also a strong rumor that Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, the famous team of Simon and Kirby that created so many of the lasting superhero concepts (as well as excellent ventures into virtually every genre), will be reunited for a series of Fly stories. The team, who originally created the Fly character, will present a multi-chapter book with Kirby soloing on a chapter, Simon soloing on another, and the team uniting for the concluding chapter.

mike gold, President and Managing Editor of **FIRST COMICS**, is interviewed in issue number eight of **COMIC FANDOM'S FORUM**. Gold talks about this new comics company, the titles being published, and the people producing them.

First Comics has announced the lineup for backup series in their new titles. Warp #1 will feature a solo story centered on Sargon - Mistress of War, one of the Wrap characters. The story will be written and drawn by two newcomers; writer John Ostrander and penciller Lenin Delsol. Ostrander is a playwright and actor while Delsol has previously appeared in two issues of Just Imagine, a local fanzine. Warp #2 will begin a three-part series, The Faceless Ones, written by Jack Harris and drawn by Steve Ditko. The faceless are magic-powered servants of Lulbanda, the focal character of Warp.

Bob Smith will ink Warp while Peter Gillis will write the dialogue, Janice Cohen will color and Bruce Petterson will serve as letterer.

First Comics has hired Bruce Petterson as Production Coordinator. Patterson previously worked at Continuity Associates under the direction of Neal Adams and Dick Giordano, and as a free-lance colorist, letterer, and inker.

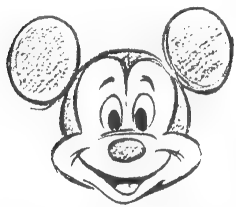
First Comics has announced two additional titles: Starslayer by Mike Grell, a book published through issue number six by Pacific Comics, and American Flag, a new series by Howard Chaykin.

Animation News

NEW DISNEY BOOKS

Fans of Walt Disney are in for a special treat as a flood of new Disney oriented books once again flood the Christmas marketplace.

TREASURES OF DISNEY ANIMATION ART will showcase over 400 illustrations (all in full color) from the vast storehouse of Disney artwork. The final selection of artwork was made by Robert Abrams who supposedly worked with some of the artists who originally created this art. The book will feature an in-



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troductory essay by animator-historian John Canemaker and will cost approximately $85.00. **WALT DISNEY'S WORLD OF FANTASY** is the book by Adrian Bailey that was supposed to appear last year. Rumor has it that the book was delayed so as not to compete with the **ILLUSION OF LIFE.** This book will cost $35.00 and, in over 250 pages, will detail new information about special effects at the Disney Studio. **WALT DISNEY'S EPCOT** by Richard Beard will also cost $35.00, and will explore the new Disney attraction that is scheduled to open on October 1st. Interestingly enough, writer Marcus Wielage, well known for his incisive writing in several video oriented periodicals, submitted a book proposal to Disney that was turned down. Wielage wanted to list credits and plot synopsis for every Disney short and submitted his idea to Disney studios so that he could obtain permission to use illustrations. Disney studios turned down his proposal prefering to concentrate on the big lavish books mentioned earlier. Wielage will continue the project and will seek an "educational" publisher like Scarecrow Press or Greenwood Press to feature his non-illustrated research. At the San Diego Con, publisher Russ Cochran announced his intention to reprint all of Carl Barks' duck stories and twenty-eight volumes worth of Floyd Gottredson's Mickey Mouse after his EC reprinting project is finished. All the Barks' duck stories have previously been reprinted in English by a foreign publisher but were not easily accessible to most U.S. fans.

TV CARTOONIST STRIKE

The Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists Local 839 which is responsible for most of the Saturday morning television series is once again considering the possibility of a strike. The Union previously struck in 1979, specifically to install a clause in their contract that would limit the amount of animation work that may be contracted overseas. The producers find the clause too restrictive and have been sending more and more animation work to Korea and Taiwan. An animator in those countries earns approximately $200.00 a month as compared to union scale in L.A. of $577.00 per week. Union representatives are quick to point out that most cartoon employees only work about six months a year, making their annual incomes much less than the weekly salary would indicate. The previous strike hampered and in some cases halted production on all of the popular Saturday morning shows. This year, producers rushed several series into production so that they could stockpile a backlog in case of another strike. Many animators feel that Local 839 is not effectively handling the problems that confront modern day animators and question how effective a strike would be at this late date.

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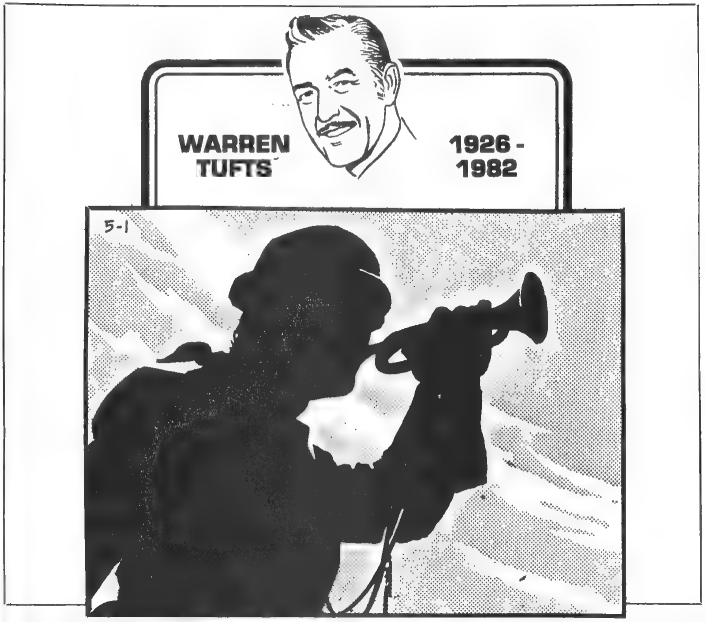
BITS AND PIECES

Congratulations to Jerry Beck, author of **THE WARNER BROTHERS CARTOONS** and research assistant on Leonard Maltin's **OF MICE AND MAGIC**, who has been named cartoon consultant for Warner Brothers on the new Steven Spielberg film, **THE TWILIGHT ZONE.** Jerry will supervise the selection of violent Warner Brothers' cartoon clips for one segment of the film .... Nelvana's **ROCK 'N RULE** has been delayed until the early part of 1983. Nelvana is also starting work on adapting Wendy Pini's **ELFQUEST** sage into animation .... The new **PAC-MAN** cartoon series will feature the voice of Marty Ingels and detail the adventures of Pac People living in a little village where they grow energy pellets .... a new issue of **ANIMANIA (No. 24)** showcasing the plot outlines for the first twenty-six episodes of Astroboy and the real story behind the **HOORAY FOR BETTY BOOP** movie (which featured the voice of Tom Smothers) is currently available for $2.50 from Dave Mruz, 3112 Holmes Avenue So., Minneapolis, MN 55408.



Warren Tufts, creator of Casey Ruggles and Lance, was killed when an experimental airplane of his own design and construction crashed. His wife, Lyn, has vowed to rebuild the plane which was Tufts's dream.

Casey Ruggles is one of the best adventure strips and one of the most sought after by collectors. An authentic story of the old West, it began 22 May 1949, as a Sunday strip. A daily was added a few months later. The strip was successful until the syndicate nixed a chance at a Ruggles TV series because they felt it would hurt sales of the strip! Tufts resigned in protest and after a short time, under a new artist and writer, the strip was discontinued in 1954.

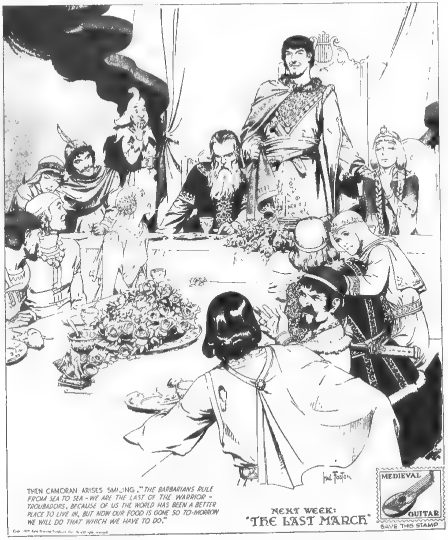
Disgusted with the syndicates, Tufts created two comic strips which he syndicated himself. The first was an unsuccessful, short-lived, humorous daily strip - "The Lone Specimen". Then he created the magnificent western Sunday page, "Lance". Lance was successful for a few years, but never enjoyed the popularity that Ruggles had; perhaps because it was a full page (later a half page) at a time when newspapers were shrinking the comic strips to postage stamp size. Lance lasted only about five years. It was Tufts's last comic strip.

In the sixties and seventies, Tufts did some minor comic book work for such Gold Key titles as Korak, Son of Tarzan and Wagon Train. He did storyboards for Saturday morning cartoons, including the Pink Panther Show. He wrote and illustrated a story for Sports Flying magazine. He devoted his creative energies to building and flying his own aircraft. He was a handsome, athletic man who died at a tragically early age.

If it were not for the stagnating creative environment of the comic strips in the fifties and sixties, we might have had thirty years of Casey Ruggles, instead of barely five.

Tufts has just begun to receive the recognition he deserves, with the publication of **A Warren Tufts Retrospective**, edited by Henry Yeo, and of several volumes of reprints of Casey Ruggles daily strips, published by the Pacific Comics Club and by John Zawadski.

Hal Foster, 1892 - 1982


THEN CAMORAN ARISES SMILING. "THE BARBARIANS RULE FROM SEA TO SEA - WE ARE THE LAST OF THE WARRIOR - TROUBADORS, BECAUSE OF US THE WORLD HAS BEEN A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE IN, BUT NOW OUR FOOD IS GONE SO TO-MORROW WE WILL DO THAT WHICH WE HAVE TO DO."
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MEDIEVAL
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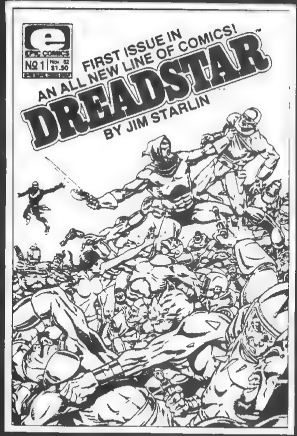
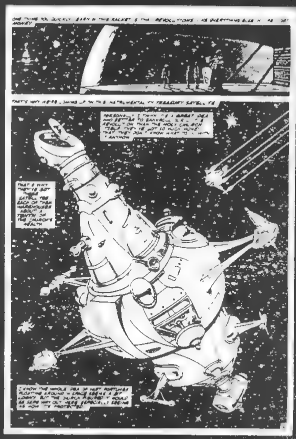
Harold Rudolph Foster was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia on August 16, 1892. He came to Chicago, became a United States citizen, created Prince Valiant - one of the great comic strips of all time and a work of art worthy of being remembered along with the stories of Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Rudyard Kipling. He died this July, just a few months before his 90th birthday and his 67th wedding aniversary. He is survived by his wife, Helen, and his two sons, Edward and Arthur, and many grandchildren.

Most famous for Prince Valiant, Hal Foster also drew the Tarzan comic strip for six years in the 1930's; a Sunday companion strip to Prince Valiant, "The Medieval Castle" in the 1940's; and a limited run daily strip, "The Song of Bernadette", in 1943.

A successful advertising and gallery artist, he got his start in comic strips by illustrating an adaptation of Tarzan of the Apes, which was serialized in newspapers. This led to a job drawing the Sunday Tarzan page. Foster often expressed dissatisfaction with the scripts he received for Tarzan, and so, in 1937, he left the successful Tarzan strip to create Prince Valiant, which he wrote and drew from 1937 until 1970. Throughout the seventies, he still wrote Prince Valiant, did the color guide and rough pencils. He retired in 1980, and had been in a nursing home, in poor health, for the last few years. Prince Valiant is currently drawn by John Cullen Murphy and written by his son, Cullen Murphy. It is still one of the most popular adventure strips.





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An interview with
BRENT ANDERSON

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BS: When did you first get interested in doing artwork?

ANDERSON: I can't remember exactly—I've been drawing since I was little, like all kids, but I didn't decide to make a career out of it until I was sixteen. I started reading comics when I was twelve but before then, comics were not allowed in my house. My mom was not impressed by the EC era—the gore and violence in comics—besides, she wanted me to get exposed to classics, so she used to read to me from Jonathan Swift's *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*, and that kind of thing. At the age of about twelve or thirteen, I began to push my boundaries out, and started to test her, by buying a couple of comics here and there. She'd say, "How many have you got?" "Oh, only a couple," and I had like sixty or seventy piled up in my room. Eventually she read a couple and thought they weren't too bad.

BS: Do you remember which ones they were?

ANDERSON: The first comic I ever bought was *FANTASTIC FOUR* number 69. It was *"By Ben Betrayed."* That was the first one I bought. I couldn't make heads or tails out of the story but I liked the characters and kept buying them. I don't remember which issue of *SPIDER-MAN* I started with, but it was around that same month. I also started picking up *THE SILVER SURFER* when it first came out. The first issues. These really turned me on.

BS: About a year later.

ANDERSON: At that time, there was a place called "The Ark" which was a junk shop that had a few comics, and I used to pick 'em up for a nickel apiece. I picked up the Silver Surfer trilogy from the *FANTASTIC FOUR* for a nickel apiece, and *FF #13*, and *SPIDEY #1* and *3* were there. That's how I learned about numerology, and why the then current issue of *SPIDER-MAN* was different from the first couple. I knew there must be a whole bunch in between, so I started collecting from there. Actually, I was really kind of late in collecting comics. I keep hearing about all these people collecting comics when they were eight and nine years old. So I got into it really late, but I liked it enough to start tracing comics, and to start drawing from them. The first thing I tried copying was one of the *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENT* stories with Dynamo, and I remember looking at it and thinking, "Well, this stuff is simple! I can do this."

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"People ask me where I get my talent, and I don't believe in talent. You work *hard* at drawing."

I got a page and a half scrawled out, and it didn't look as good, so I put it aside.

BS: It was deceptive...

ANDERSON: There was a lot to be learned. So I started drawing simpler comics than that. I had a character called Radium, who was a robot. He was just a triangular-shaped robot with a round head and a little peace symbol on his chest. He fought villainy, and all that kind of stuff. He was fun. I was turning out two and three issues a day of those things, you know.

BS: Your first exposure to mass-production.

ANDERSON: Yeah. Right. Actually, I think the *idea* behind comics was what intrigued me. It wasn't the art at that time; I wasn't really interested in the art. I had a friend named George who was really into comics, so that was sort of how I got into it. He showed me Steranko's *CAPTAIN AMERICA* with those big double-paged splashes and all that. It really blew me away, so I started getting really involved and, we drew comics for each other. Even after I moved, we would send our comics back and forth through the mail. He had his own set of characters and I had mine. We even adapted a name for our group, called "Fab Comics Group." You know, "Marvel" was short for Marvelous, and "Fab" was short for Fabulous, right? So, we were really caught up in the Marvel mystique, even though George was more into DC comics. He showed me a copy of *STRANGE ADVENTURES #213* [one of the *"Deadman"* issues], which was the Neal Adams *"Don't Die, Tiny"* issue. I looked at it, and I thought, "Looks like all the rest of the DC Comics." I couldn't tell art styles apart at the time. I think it was just the mystique of comic books, the story and the words, and the pictures put together that intrigued me. It wasn't until much later that I noticed a difference in art styles. Gradually, over the years, I kept drawing comics. I think I did, 23 issues of the "Radium" character. He eventually evolved into a humanoid shape from a robot shape. He had muscles, I was getting into anatomy, and Steranko panel composition and all that. About that time, I met Frank Cirrocco. He used to copy comic panels from comic books (laughs) (I don't know if he wants anybody to know that or not). He'd make his own posters, but he'd never really gotten interested in doing comic books, *per se*. So I'd show him all the comics I had drawn over the years and he told me some time later that he'd said to himself at the time, "I can do this!" Then, he sort of became the other half of "Fab Comics" and we'd draw them for each other. Frank Cirrocco, Gary Winnick, and myself saw a couple of fanzines that had come out, and decided that publishing our own fanzine would be kind of neat. We knew we weren't ready for professionalism. We couldn't become pros but fanzines are like a mid-way point, so we put out *VENTURE #1* in 1971, which was real exciting for me. Financially, it was a complete bust, but then most fanzines are, right? Just the whole idea behind it, though—organizing something, putting it together was really exciting. I think there were five issues in six years. That took us up to 1976, and in 1976, we decided "Well, we're ready." I had contributed to fanzines over the years because editors had seen *VENTURE*. They'd ask if I'd like to contribute? I'd send them artwork.

BS: I remember seeing your things in HEROINES SHOWCASE a little after I got uninvolved with them.

ANDERSON: Yeah. Actually, *THE HEROINES SHOWCASE*, that came later. That was after I had become pretty much a pro. That came after I had come back from the 1976 trip, which I'll get to. *VENTURE #5* had come out: it was slick, it had full-process color covers on it, and the story I had done for it I felt was professional enough to use as a sample. I thought, "Boy, I'm ready!" So I, with the other three guys, Gary Winnick, Frank Cirrocco, and Tony Salmons decided there was safety in numbers, and thought we'd all go out together and face the Big Cruel Appie. We got a station wagon from the Drive-away people and drove across the country in about-three and a half days—driving all night. I think we stopped twice, all the way across the country. We finally got here, and beat the pavement, just like everybody else. Frank decided pretty quickly—after doing a story for Gold Key, and a few spot illustrations for Marvel—that comics weren't really his bag. Tony Salmons...you don't know who he is, do you?

BS: No, though I remember seeing his name. I thought he did some inking?

ANDERSON: He inked one Sandy Plunkett story. That was a *"Clea"* story. Tony's work seemed effortless and like the most natural thing for him to do. The quality of the figure drawing, the composition, and story-telling were all very sensitive. People ask me where I get my talent, and I don't believe in talent, I say it's hard work. You work *hard* at drawing, and if you keep drawing all the time, you can't help but get better. And then, someone like Tony Salmons comes along, and blows that theory to Hell (laughs) because it seems like he at just eighteen, was drawing magic on the paper while I sweated on mine. It was just uncanny.

So the four of us came out, and Tony was self-conscious about his work; he couldn't really adapt it to the printing of comics, his work was too fine and too delicate to be printed very good. That job he did on Sandy Plunkett was very crude for Tony. Gary Winnick liked publishing *VENTURE* magazine and was interested in forming an art studio with Frank Cirrocco. So out of the four guys, I

"I decided I didn't know enough about drawing to make comics worthwhile."

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was really the only one that was that gung-ho about comics. And after six months, and two stories, one for DC and one for Marvel, I decided I didn't know enough about drawing to make comics worthwhile. Making a living was out of the question—I couldn't draw fast enough or draw the kind of comics that I wanted to draw. I wanted to draw good comics. So after deciding I didn't know enough about drawing, I went home after six months. We came out in June, and I went home at the end of November. I went through a kind of "failure period" where I said to myself, "Well, you gave it you best shot, and it didn't work out." I stayed with my parents for about three months, and hardly did any drawing at all. I was just in the dumps for three months. And then I went out and got some commercial work. I did a strip for a magazine called *HORSE LOVERS NATIONAL MAGAZINE*. It was for people who owned horses. You know, suburban-type people. I did a comic strip for them called *"Saddle Tales"* which was about a kid and his horse, and the horse was a sort of an intelligent—Lassie type horse. It was a one-page gag strip. I did that for a while, just out of necessity. I wanted to do comics, and I wanted to write, too. I wanted to get into that aspect of it. I didn't attend formal art classes but I went to a fellow named Jim Smythe who was a classical art teacher at Foothill Junior College. He was probably the greatest influence on me as an "anatomist." Then *STAR WARS* came out on May 25th. That particular day, walking out of that theatre, that sort of turned me around, as far as getting me out of my doldrums. I thank George Lucas for that, I guess, because *STAR WARS* inspired me to go out and do a lot of neat stuff, or to try, anyway. That was the middle of 1977, and, for the next two years, I just drew like crazy. I attended classes, I did some painting, I got into oils after meeting Joe Chiodo because he was into painting. He kind of re-introduced me to painting, because I had done some in high school. Eventually, I just decided that I was going to try New York again, because there was nothing happening out in California for me, and I just had this drive—I wanted to do comics! I wanted to draw comics. Everything was against it—they don't pay well, it's a lot of hard work, you don't have the control over the finished product that one would like, but there was this *urge*, I just had to draw comics. So I came out, and thought I could draw fast enough and I was sure enough about my art that I could do it. So, in 1979, I packed up my bags and came out with Joe Chiodo. We flew out this time, no driving across the country again. When I got up to Marvel—I had done a five page *"Angel"* story for them in 1976, and that job was still in the drawer when I came out here. People remembered me and they'd say "Oh, yeah, I sorta remember that story. It was The Angel, or something." So they said, "Well, we'll give an inventory plot to you." What that eventually wound up being was a *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* inventory issue. I also did a *DR. STRANGE* which hasn't seen print, but will probably be in *MARVEL FANFARE*. Then, when I was working on the *DR. STRANGE*, they hired Louise Jones to edit some books, and they wanted to bring Ka-Zar back to protect the merchandising of the character. He was approaching that time period....

BS: Expiration of the title.

ANDERSON: Right. So, they wanted to introduce the character again because the Conan movie was being planned, or getting started, and they felt they could market the character as a barbarian character. Louise Jones, whom she was hired, sort of brought Bruce Jones from Warren over with her, and asked Bruce if he wanted to write something for Marvel. I think they originally wanted John Buscema to pencil, and...I'm unsure of the writer, now...

BS: We might be able to look up those news items.

ANDERSON: Well, they were originally going to have those other people work on it. Actually the first ads they had coming out for the new book had *those* two collaborators. But then, Louise saw my *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* (she was editing the book at the time), and she really wanted to use it because she thought it looked good. She said, "Do you want to work on a regular book?" Well, I didn't know if I wanted a regular book at that time. I thought a regular book was too much for me to work on since I was trying for other areas too. Like I said, I was getting into painting with Chiodo and I though, well, maybe I could work on inventory jobs at Marvel, and maybe a cover or two for their black-and-whites, just to keep my fingers in paint, so to speak. So I told her I wasn't really sure. I gave her a definite maybe. Everytime I'd go up to the office, she'd come up, "Well, have you decided to do the book yet? You decided to do the book yet?" And I'd keep telling her, "No, I don't know yet, I don't think so..." So finally, we went out to dinner with Shooter and some other people and Alan Weiss was with us—this was after a convention, one of the Creation Cons—and Alan Weiss came up and said, "I hear you're thinking about doing *"Ka-Zar."* Boy, I really like the flesh heroes. I really like the body heroes, there you got to draw bodies!" He was all gung-ho, and I said, "Well, I don't know. Weezie told me it was a monthly, 17 pages a month, and I don't know if I really want to bog myself down with that." So Alan said, "Look, try it for six issues, get the bonus. (Laughs) You can't lose by doing six issues." And I thought, well, six months, I could do six issues. So I thought about it, and thought about it, and finally decided, okay, I'll give it a shot. If it seemed like a waste of time, I could drop it. So I went back, and told her I thought about it

all night, and decided I was going to do it. I even called her up just to make sure she hadn't got another artist to work on it, because I wasn't about to say "Hey! I want to do this book" and have her tell me she got somebody else to draw it. I called her up late one afternoon and said, "I think I'll give it a try." And she said "Oh, that's great!" I said "I've thought about it, drawing dinosaurs isn't so bad; I used to like dinosaurs when I was a kid. Ka-Zar's a hero, jumping around, Zabu's a big cat, it sounded real neat, and with Shanna, I get to draw women..." So I just sat around after calling her, and thought, wow, this is going to be real great. I went in the next day—I guess I was delivering *DR. STRANGE*—and said, "I think I can handle 17 pages a month." And *then* she hit me with the fact that the books had gone to 22 pages! So then I had to re-think everything in about two minutes. Whether I wanted to go on with this or not. So I decided, yeah, I'd go on with it and try the book out. So we called Bruce Jones from the office—the first time I had ever talked to him—and I guess Louise had sent him copies of the *BATTLESTAR*, because he thought that was really good, and he thought Ka-Zar would be a really good book, so we started working on the synopsis of the first issue, and what we wanted to do with the character. So that brings us up to *KA-ZAR*.

BS: Before we get into that large question, you said you didn't want to burden yourself down with too much work of one type. How else were you supporting yourself at this point?

ANDERSON: I had savings. I had saved up. See, I wasn't one of these guys who like to play the martyr, they say "Well, I came out to New York with a hundred dollars in my pocket and a song!" And to me, that's kind of silly. You should be prepared for things. I like to be prepared, have that security. I had saved up about $1,500.00 before coming out, doing things like the *"Saddle Tales"* comic strip, and I had done an awful lot of commercial work out in California. Frank Cirrocco runs a studio called Horizon Zero Graphics, where he does a lot of fantasy-oriented material. He lives in Silicon Gulch, which, for the uninitiated, is the Santa Clara valley, where they produce silicon chips and microprocessors, and the companies want to have a futuristic image for their advertising. So Frank does pretty good there. I was doing a lot of that kind of work, brochures, illustrations, things like that. From that, I had saved up enough money to warrant coming out to New York, where I could live for a while sans income. My original plan was to stay here for three months—"I'll see what happens in three months and then go home." Then, six months passed, and I said "I'll stay here a year and see what happens." After a year had passed, I got into *KA-ZAR* on a monthly schedule, and I found I liked living here a lot more than the first trip out. The first trip, I got my feet in the water, felt the temperature, and then got out. When I came back, I knew what to expect. I knew how to handle things. It wasn't such a culture shock. Laid-back kid from California. I was prepared to live on absolutely no income for a couple of months. It really wasn't that long before I got work from Marvel. Like I said, I came out prepared, not only money-wise, but career-wise. I had done a lot of studying and a lot of drawing.

BS: Once you started doing work for Marvel, the inventory jobs and stuff, did they give you any further instruction or guidelines or anything? Was there anybody at the office willing to take you aside and give you advice on either composition for effective comic books or storytelling, or did you pretty much fly on your own?

ANDERSON: Actually, when I did the *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA*, the response was real positive. They really liked it. I work in very tight panels usually. I call that "penciller's paranoia." Because I figured, no matter what inker they gave it to, if he followed the lines, he couldn't lose. That was my basic attitude. When I did the *DR. STRANGE* inventory, the one major criticism I got was that I was not leaving enough copy space. I was composing the panels without copy in mind. I would compose something in the middle of the panel that would extend to all the borders. Or the story-telling in the panel was told in the entire panel, so if you covered up any part of it with copy, you would lose some of the story-telling. That was the major problem. Jim DeMatteis scripted the *DR. STRANGE* story, and when Mary Jo Duffy told me it was not right to cramp the writer's style, by crowding out everything to the border, I got real self-conscious about that, and when I saw Jim, I said "I'm sorry I crowded you out." He said, "Hey! It doesn't matter. The story was told in the pictures, and I didn't have to write as much," which made me feel better. But I try to leave more copy space now. It's kinda hard, Marvel-system, because you know that the basic story is, because you're given a plot, but when the writer goes back in and actually writes the story, you don't know the tangents he's going to take, or where he's going to put in heavy copy to explain something, or where he's going to leave it light. I think that's one of the drawbacks of doing a job Marvel-style. If you're given a complete script, you know what all the copy is, so can kinda place it in the artwork...Make it *part* of the artwork.

BS: Have you ever done a story from a full script?

ANDERSON: The DC story I did in 1976 was called *"Mail-Order Brides to Another World"* and it was an inventory job for their love comics. They were trying to change the image of their love comics...

BS: That never saw print.

ANDERSON: Yeah. (Laughs) And I guess they figured they didn't know where else to put it. I mean, it was a kind of unusual story to begin with. But working from a script that way, I know where I would place the balloons. A lot of times, the editor would change the placement of the balloons, but at least you could leave enough space so you could change them around. Working with Bruce on *KA-ZAR* is really good on that factor. He doesn't overdo the copy. I think we meld real nice together. It's a real good balance of words and pictures.

BS: Do you think this is a product of your collaboration, or just a lucky break?

ANDERSON: You mean in the sense of Bruce and I getting together?

BS: There's a certain amount of readjustment that goes on between the writer and the penciller. and if they stick it out long enough, the artist gets an idea where the writer is going to lay it on real thick.

ANDERSON: Yeah. What's the word? Symbiosis. We're sort of joining together. Actually, I have a fairly heavy influence in plotting the stories. We'll hash out a plot, and I'll tell Bruce, "Well, this sequence, I think would be real good." Zabu swimming out to meet Ka-Zar and Shanna coming back from the island in issue number 5 was my idea. I thought it would be a nice touch. I mean, if Zabu had to keep coming in at the end or beginning of every story, and be left behind, I figure his entrances and exits should at least build his character. And I thought it would be a nice gesture to have him swimming out to find Ka-Zar. I mean, they're inseparable." Wherever Ka-Zar goes, Zabu follows him. I'm sure wherever Zabu went, Ka-Zar would follow him, if it wasn't for Shanna, right? So you get a weird triangle going on there.

BS: Actually, the way Ka-Zar found Paugea was following Zabu in the first place, so it's worked out that way already.

ANDERSON: Right. Remember when I was talking about how the series just kind of fell into place as far as the grand scope of the series went? You can go back and find these little things in past issues and equate them to things now, which makes it seem like they were all planned out from the beginning, which of course they weren't. It's turned out to be a very natural progression.

BS: You mentioned before that you wanted to get in on the writing of comics, too. Do you fell you have sufficient input into the KA-ZAR series to satsify that urge, or do you want

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> "I feel that Bruce is giving to the series much more than I ever could if I wrote it solo."

to take it further?

ANDERSON: Well, as far as ***KA-ZAR*** goes, yes, I am satisfied. Because I feel that what Bruce is giving to the series is much better than what I ever could if I wrote it solo. He comes up with some neat things that surprise me. I enjoy drawing a sequence like in number five, in which Ka-Zar dives into the water to meet Zabu who's swimming out to find him, when they run into the plesiosaur. I designed the whole sequence, because for one thing Marvel likes to show off the hero's power, show who the hero is toward the beginning of each story; who is Ka-Zar? Ka-Zar is Tarzan who fights dinosaurs. Okay, we'll have him fight a dinosaur. But when I designed that whole sequence I had no idea what Bruce was going to write in there. So, when I get the script back and saw what he had put in there, it really surprised me—*really good* stuff, having Ka-Zar do the old *JAWS* bit (hums *JAWS* theme) and coming under Zabu to tickle him. That bit where he's thinking "The beautiful girl swimming in the water?" That by no stretch of the imagination is a beautiful girl!" That's what I enjoy about doing the book. And Bruce tells me that when he gets the pencils, he'll see I've put in little bits that weren't in the plot, and he's surprised. He'll tell me, "I really liked that bit! That was good." And I'll call him back sometime later after getting the script and say "I really liked that." You know plotting—and helping plot—the stories with Bruce is no problem, but I still want to learn about writing, which is sort of what I'm doing. I study Bruce's writing, and how he handles things. And Frank Miller's ***DAREDEVIL***—Im watching the pitfalls and successes he has in writing his own book. I try to pick up and emulate writing techniques I think are good in the comics medium.

BS: Would you say that your studies, such as they are, in writing comics are almost entirely present-day comics? Or are you taking it back any further?

ANDERSON: Well, I've always been a story-teller, and I have written before. I wrote a lot in high school, and I have a journal—a writing book—I keep at home. And when I think of ideas, I'll write them down. Things that strike me as poignant or meaningful, or a situation which I think would have a good conflict. So I think in terms of story-telling. I didn't want to get pigeon-holed up at Marvel as a penciller—which is why I ink my own covers—and I didn't want to be considered *just* an artist, which is why I help Bruce plot ***KA-ZAR.*** Because I'm basically a story-teller. Whether my writing is good or bad, I have no idea, because it's never been published, and I've had no feedback. I watch what I think is good television, things like ***LOU GRANT, M*A*S*H*** and ***HILL STREET BLUES,*** and I study the writing done for them. These are the three shows I watch each week. And in addition, some things on PBS. Comic book writing and TV writing are very close. If you take away the pictures from television and the pictures from comics and add description to create mood, you have short stories and novels.

BS: Have you written any prose?

ANDERSON: Yeah, just for myself. I think that fifty years after I'm dead, they'll find these books and say, "Oh! He could write prose!" But it's not something I really want to do now. If I ever do, it will probably be in conjunction with pictures. Similar to what Craig Russell does—a very lyrical, philosophical fantasy work. That really intrigues me. I like that kind of thing. Writing for comics is unique, it's a real balancing act—to balance the words and the art just right—that takes a lot of learning and a lot of ability, and that's what I'm striving to do.

BS: Do you think you're learning more about writing comics by studying the comics directly?

ANDERSON: In conjunction with other things, yeah. Whenever I see a movie, I can't help but analyze it because I'm a comic book artist now, and I try to visualize how I would draw that movie in a comic book. How would I do a pan shot cinematically with panel-to-panel continuity? Or when I see special effects techniques... one episode of ***HILL STREETS BLUES*** had a policeman who was murdered by a prostitute. She slit his throat with a razor, and that particular shot was done with a slow motion freeze-frame technique, which slowed down time. That was really striking to me, and I wondered how I would do that in a comic book. So it's sort of an adaptation. What would I do? That's why ***STAR WARS*** hit me so hard because there it was, a perfect comic book on film. Even the ***"Superman"*** films are good adaptations of comics to film. You can't do comics on film though. That sounds like a contradiction, but you have to change the comics for film in order to get that feeling *of* comics *on* film. Otherwise, it's campy and comes out bad. And if you're adapting film into comics, film has to change too, because you can't *literally* change film into comics. Check the "photo-novelization" of current films to see my point. There has to be a change-over in the adaptation from one medium to the other.

BS: John Buscema at one point asked how many people in the class had taken life-drawing, and everybody raised their hands, and he said "Working with comics, you're at a disadvantage." Whether or not you want to take it that far or not, it's an easy point to see. Things have to be adapted to fit the needs of the medium. Another question: do you ever take that mental process of yours the other way? Say, if you're reading a novel, do you adapt that into comics?

ANDERSON: Yeah, I do. I can't help it. I can't understand speed reading. I can *do* speed reading—scanning a page and picking up the gist of the story and the characters—but I don't like to read stories that way. I like to read stories at a pace as if I were watching a movie. As a movie director, how would I pace this novel? And I read it as fast as the story dictates. If I come to a scene where there are two characters passionately in love with one another and having a lover's quarrel, I find myself reading in character, enunciating the words, as

"The simpler comics are... the better they are."

ONLY THE MACHINE CAN DO THAT. THE SLIGHTEST ERROR IN TAMPERING WITH IT WOULD DESTROY THE ESSENCE!
OH, SHAKIRA, COME WITH ME TO THE MOVIES! I'LL BUY YOU AN AMORPHAL FOR ALL I SAY, YOU'LL JOIN ME, I SAY IT!!
TANGIBLE.
© 1982 Marvel Comics

if I'm acting out the two characters' roles in a movie. Whereas if I come to a sequence in a story where there's a great action/battle scene, or two guys having a tremendous fist-fight, that will read real fast. The reading will read as fast as the movie would. If the novel was a movie I was making, and you came to an action sequence, that sequence would move much faster than a scene with two people talking, so I actually read it faster.

BS: Where were we?

ANDERSON: **The simpler comics are, the clearer they are to read. The better they are.**

BS: And how do you define a simpler comic?

ANDERSON: **Easily read without being distracting. Of course, that's a very subjective statement.**

BS: It is.

ANDERSON: **This may not apply to most people. Seeing things with an artist's eye, I see the art in comics as being the strong point. I don't think the balance in comics is 50-50, words and pictures. You can't tell a comics story with just words, but you *can* tell a comics story with just pictures. To tell the story you don't really have to have any words. You can enhance the story and make it better with words, but I think the balance leans a little to the art side. That's my own personal bias.**

BS: When you say that the art could actually tell the story, are you speaking just of the plot, or are you speaking of the entire story and all its elements?

ANDERSON: **The entire story: motivation, characterization, emotion, of course, you can do it simpler with words. You can write "Because of the death of her parents..."**

BS: "Lydia is overwrought..."

ANDERSON: **Yes. "This young man meant a lot to her." Well, if you did it all in pictures, you'd have to show a thoughtful look on her face, flash back to a scene of her parents being killed, and her looking horrified, then flashing back forward her seeing the young man with stars in her eyes, or whatever. You can do it in pictures, but it takes a lot longer. The old adage, "One picture is worth a thousand words," that may be true...**

BS: ...But there are some pictures that take a thousand words to get across, as well.

ANDERSON: **Yeah. So, getting back to the simplicity of comics, I think, me—as an artist—if I get hung up on the art in a story, the beautiful rendering of a particular panel, which really has no inherent meaning to the story (that's subjective again, it's my opinion) it's distracting to me, as a reader. I think comics should be simple. They should be easily read and easily understood.**

BS: Coming from an artist, I'm kind of surprised to hear that, because *as* an artist, one would expect that you would be interested in polishing and finished and enhancing your visual elements, and it sound almost as if you're limiting *yourself* and *your* drawings in order to make the story more forceful.

ANDERSON: **Well, I think I'm looking at comics realistically. Comics is a viable medium within itself. Comics—to me, anyway—is *not* words with illustrations. It's a juxtaposition of words and drawings. Detailed, rendered anatomy does not necessarily tell good comics. *Good* anatomy I think is necessary because it adds that certain amount of realism that can get the reader caught up in the story.**

BS: Do you think realism is as necessary as internal consistency? Some of the most popular comics artists have a strange intensely personalized view of what realistic anatomy is. But because they seemed to deliver it with such authority the reader can be caught up even more in their little worlds. Jack Kirby and Joe Kubert come to mind.

ANDERSON: ***Realistic* anatomy is boring. If you've ever sat and looked through an artist's sketch book from life-drawing sessions, you know that it's boring. I mean, there may be some nicely-rendered figures, and some beautiful forms, and some nice standing figures, but they're just good conte crayon drawings. They are nice to look at, but boring. If you did that in comic books, people would ho-hum them. They are not exciting. So you have to exaggerate and abbreviate. I think abbreviation is probably the best word for drawing comics. I'm an entomologist, I'm an illustrator. You asked if by doing simple drawings, I was limiting myself. I don't think so. Comics are better when they're simpler and don't distract. It's the juxtaposition of words and pictures that makes comics unique—it's not the art itself, and it's not the words themselves. It's the *juxtaposition* of the two.**

BS: So when either factor tried to outstrip the other, you get less than the sum of the two of them?

ANDERSON: **I think it's synergistic. In other words, when you add one and one it's more than two, because the words and pictures boost each other. One without the other is merely one aspect of comics. When they are put together, they create their own unique medium. Let's face it, comics today are *not* reproduced very well. The printing is not good *at all*. Sometimes at a comics stand, I forget to look through the whole issues to see that all the pages are**

IT TAKES TWO TO KISS.
BUG OFF!
YOU STILL LOVE HIM, DON'T YOU?
BU...S! JUST LIKE YOU STILL LOVE LEANNE!
IS THAT WHY YOU DID IT, OUT OF SPITE FOR LEANNE?
'I don't want the art to be distracting."
(c) 1985 Marvel Comics

printed good. So I've bought comics at comics stores and taken them home and found maybe four pages out of twenty-two that are faded, washed-out, muddy, really almost unreadable. You used to get that in the old days, too, but I thought the printing was a little better. They used foil plates, for one thing.

BS: Better paper, too.

ANDERSON: Right. And so—this may sound surprising, but I think the bad printing is a blessing in disguise. It's forcing artists like Frank Miller and myself to simplify our work, to find the *abbreviated* form of drawing to tell the story. We're doing it for the printing, but I feel it's better to do it that way for *comics*. I don't think I'm limiting myself, because I'm capable of doing the illustration. If I wanted to really get in there and "doll up" the art—make it absolutely perfect...for one thing I don't have time, and for the money I'm paid I *have* to do a certain amount of work a day to make it worthwhile, the reality of business rears its ugly head. But I don't want the art to be distracting. If I were to "doll up" every panel, and make each one exquisite as an illustration, it would be distracting.

BS: Do you think the general audience would perceive it that way?

ANDERSON: I don't know. Probably not (laughs). Like I said, I'm looking at this from an artist's viewpoint, so it's real hard for me to look at it objectively. But maybe I'm totally wrong. Maybe some people say "That's a cop-out! He just wants to draw simple pictures! He doesn't want to detail things up—take the time!" But I honestly think some of Jack Kirby's *FANTASTIC FOUR*'s were some of the best comics ever made. With their simplicity, their dynamics, the way he filled up a panel and made them look big. He had a little panel, two inches by two inches, and he made those characters look *big—impressive!* Then he drew a killer robot—as a kid of 14 reading that stuff, I was afraid of that killer robot! That really scared me, you know, in the *context* of the comics story. I wasn't shivering or sweating or anything, but Kirby knew how to abbreviate it to the point where you know exactly what was going on and you could feel what was going on. But if you analyze the artwork, analyze it as artwork, it didn't hold up at all. The figures don't stand on the ground, the feet do not plant themselves on the ground, they all seem to float on their tippy-toes. The flames that he drew, that's not real fire, that's an impression of fire, but you *know* it's fire. The Thing with his blockiness—the way Kirby drew it—if you tried to interpret that realistically, then when he put his arm up, why didn't a bunch of that stuff crack and break off? You would think it would, unless it was flexible—and if it was flexible, how comes it didn't bend or make folds? But that doesn't matter, because he was doing it impressionistically.

BS: We were talking about this with Frank. He used the term "emblematic."

ANDERSON: Actually, I heard him say that before, and I agree; it's a good word. Kirby didn't create his "short-cuts" because he wanted to draw comics faster necessarily—he did it because he was trying to break his drawing down into its most simplistic and dynamic form. And his stuff is very simple. Even his complex machinery is not distracting in the least. It's not overly rendered, but you get the impression of a massive piece of complex machinery. The reason I'm going into Kirby is because I'm doing an *X-MEN ANNUAL* with The Fantastic Four in it, and I've used a lot of his stuff as reference. Analyzing his comics, I have a totally new light on comic book art itself—and it's totally unique. There is a way to do comics art which is different from illustration, different from painting, different from life-drawing studies—it's different from *any* other kind of art in *any* other field. That's what I was trying to say about the juxtaposition of words and art in comics. It's as unique a medium as film, as novels, as whatever other medium one can think of.

BS: So, to you, communication of the story and proper juxtaposition of the visual and narrative elements are the major responsibility of the artist.

ANDERSON: Yeah, I think so. If you mean making it clear to people what you're drawing, yeah.

BS: That's really the artist's primary job in comics.

ANDERSON: Yeah, his job, or I should say, my job—I'm not gonna tell other artists how to do stories. My job is to make the story as clear and readable as possible, without sacrificing subtlety. I do like nuance and subtlety to things.

BS: And what elements do you use in your work to emphasize that?

ANDERSON: I really don't know. Just my interpretation or impression of a given scene. What I stress as being important in a scene will be revealed by what I draw, and how I depict that scene. Dealing with Ka-Zar and Shanna as two people who, within the realm of *KA-ZAR* itself, have very realistic personalities. When Bruce gives me a plot, sometimes he'll give me complete stretches of dialogue, as if it's in script form. That's one reason I like collaborating with Bruce. I can take that script, and I can draw the character's faces the way I think they should look when they're saying those words—my interpretation to the actions and reactions to the words being said. So the nuances and subtleties that I would put in there are as a complement to the story,

the facial expressions, body languages, composition of the panel, where I put lights and darks. Like I was explaining before, it's no good to put in a lot of double-lighting and rendering on a figure or a face, or in a panel of some sort, unless it adds to the mood. If you have happiness and lightness in a scene, it's happy and gay and having fun, you don't want to put in a lot of deep shadows and heavy blacks in that panel, because it's contrary to the feeling of lightness, the feeling of exuberance, that kind of thing. Yet, again, if you're doing a scene in a back alley where someone's about to get murdered, you don't want to have this overall lighting effect. You want to have a mood, you want to have a dark face. You want to have a dark, shadowy corners—heaviness, heavy blacks. It's all interpretation. The nuances and subtlety I put in as an afterthought. To accentuate what's being said and what the story's telling.

So I don't know how to answer you regarding what I think about, it's just my first impression, whatever hits me.

BS: Neither nuance or subtlety are big sellers in comics. Do you feel what you're doing with them is...I'm tempted to say unique?

ANDERSON: *I don't think it's unique, I think it's just that my interpretation might make a little different than the normal Marvel fare. I'll get in trouble for saying "normal Marvel fare" (laughs), but I like subtlety in stories and all that. That's what I think makes a good story. If you work in general broad overviews of characters—which we were talking earlier about with Superman—you have to work in a general broad overview, you can't change the character for whatever reason.*

BS: You can't even endow him that much. Once you start getting into that sort of details, the possibility of being contradicted becomes greater.

ANDERSON: *Or having him change. They don't want the character to change, so you can't change him at all. The idea of changing a character, to me, is essential in the believability and keeping interest in that character alive. So I don't think what I'm doing is any more unique than what anybody else is doing. Everybody is an individual.*

BS: And it's just your choice to play up the subtlety and nuance...

ANDERSON: *That's what I find interesting. That's the reason I'm drawing comics. If I was put in the position of just drawing what I was given as a job, I would feel no more creative than a guy at General Motors in an assembly line that puts hub caps on automobiles. You see the finished car, but there's really no feeling of accomplishment. If you put a whole car together yourself, you say "I built that car." The feeling of accomplishment is much greater. Whereas being part of an assembly-line—last penciling or just inking—I couldn't do that. The reason I like doing KA-ZAR is that it's a mutual collaboration. Bruce, Weezie, Carlos and myself all contribute to the finished product, and feel—despite the changes and despite the editorial decisions, the rules and regulations we're forced to live under, and all that sort of thing—that we enjoy what we're doing. As soon as it stops being enjoyable is the time I leave.*

BS: Do you see yourself doing comics as a long-term career, then?

ANDERSON: *I don't know.*

BS: It seems like you're in a pretty ideal situation, in that you want creative input, you want to do a certain type of storytelling, and you're allowed to do both because your editor lets you, and your writer wants to do it too. Maybe I'm being cynical, but it doesn't seem that the ideal situation can last forever.

ANDERSON: *No, it can't. As far as the long-term aspects of me drawing comics go, I think it will end when it stops being fun. As long as I'm interested in doing it—not necessarily KA-ZAR—I'll continue. As soon as the fun has gone out of it, it's no longer worthwhile for me to do it. I'm working on a project for Neal Adams, called THE SPACING DUTCHMAN, an outer-space spy/adventure story, with an elderly James Bond-type character and a Modesty Blaise-type character who's a witch. It's an espionage story, and on that, I'll be doing the penciling, the inking, and possibly the coloring. On top of that, I'll be doing a wrap-around cover, which will be painted. As far as the illustration part of my career goes, that will be fed doing things like the "Dutchman" cover painting, a few things for Marvel. Comics are only one aspect of drawing, one aspect of story-telling that I'm interested in. I'm also interested in writing. I want to write novels. (Laughs) Well, maybe not novels, but short stories, creating new ideas. To me, comics are a very, very good way of telling a story with a minimum number of words and using pictures to tell the visuals. Being a visual person an an artist, I lean in that direction. If I wasn't an artist, if I didn't have any urge or drive to continue drawing or to even have started, I'd probably be a writer, or film director—two other interests of mine. But if I had to combine being a film director and being a writer, I can't think of a more perfect combination than comics. I think comics can be very cinematic, and you can tell good stories with comics. So I've sort of found a nice happy medium. Illustration has always been one of my interests, too. You really can't do color illustration in comics, so it's extremely limited in that respect. I'd like to try my hand at what Howard Chaykin does one day, but I still have this urge to get comics out of my system.*

BS: However long that takes.

ANDERSON: *Right. And as you said, KA-ZAR is an ideal situation to do that, with the almost total carte blanche we have with the character, creating anything we want to around the character. In a nutshell, Bruce had already proved himself as a good writer of comics and Louise wanted Bruce to work on KA-ZAR which she would edit. They basically told us, "This book never sold in the past, the way it was, so go ahead and do whatever you want to with it. You can change the characters, do whatever you want." What happened ultimately is that after the first issue came out, the people up at the offices saw the book, and a couple of them were put off by the changes in the character. The fact that he suddenly went from someone who talked like The Hulk to becoming a semi-messed-up intellectual student—it shocked a couple of people there, and it wasn't Ka-Zar to them.*

BS: That's curious.

ANDERSON: *Yeah, well, I felt we had to have an explanation someplace as to why he changed. But Bruce's and my opinion was that he didn't sell the way he was, so we had nothing to lose by changing him. As two creators, continuity has never been all important to us. We observed that Ka-Zar was—not very interesting. So we took it upon ourselves to make the character interesting. I don't think I would have lasted on the book this long if they had said no, we can't continue this, we'll have to go back to the way he was. I probably wouldn't be doing it. There's only so many times you can draw the figure doing the same thing, "Ka-Zar kill!" It gets boring after a while. I like to have Ka-Zar frolicking with Zabu, making love with Shanna (within the boundaries of the Comics Code), dealing with his conflicts, things like that. If he really likes this place, and there's no conflict, then it's not an interesting story. Which is why we came up with the "Civilization versus jungle life," conflict within himself. Actually, I had the plot for number five (which sort of explains why he was that way) in mind when we started the series, never really anticipating having to use it. But when all the response came back that the character had changed so drastically, there had to be some hint as to why it changed. Number five sort of explains it. Ka-Zar's one human friend in the Savage Land gets killed by a disease which could easily have been cured if they'd been in a place of civilization where they had the cure for the disease. So his reaction to that was,*

"We changed Ka-Zar's character to give him motivation."

YOU SAY EVOLUTION'S WEIRD - I SAY IT'S MAN'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT. LOOK AT THE NEW YORK SKYLINE! NOW THAT'S AN ACCOMPLISHMENT
WE'VE BEEN AVOIDING THE FACT THAT NEITHER OF US HAS THE GUTS TO FACE THE CHALLENGE OF A REAL JOB WITH REAL VALUES
WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED HERE PULLING LIZARDS OUT OF THE MUCK? I THINK WE'RE GETTING BORED
HOW ABOUT A BEER?
HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED--
...THAT YOU'RE TOTALLY FULL OF CRAP? OKAY
SPAT
© 1982 Marvel Comics

"Well, what good am I? Here I am on the top of the food chain of this place, and what good is this?" In other words, Ka-Zar began to think. He didn't just accept himself as being another animal in the forest. He was a man, and what were his accomplishments as a man? None. There were absolutely *no* accomplishments he had made. He had become Lord of the Jungle—big deal. Tarzan was lord of the jungle, but he was a *real* lord. I guess Kevin Plunder was heir of a lord, wasn't he?

BS: Something like that.

ANDERSON: **So he's sort of a bland Tarzan. But even Tarzan had a juxtaposition between his English nobility and his life in the African jungle. He preferred the jungle. Well, so did Ka-Zar when he first came out, but that's been done, so let's say he's lived in the jungle all his life, and he admires civilization. He admires civilization, not for its inherent nobility or good aspects, as far as the city goes, but as an *accomplishment*—Man's Achievement. He says in the first issue, "Look at the New York sky-line. Now *that's* an achievement. Nature couldn't build something like that. Only man can." And that's his achievement, to build. Not only to build physical things, but to build his mind—and make it better. What was Ka-Zar before that? He was stagnant. He was just another beast in the jungle, and that's hardly interesting.**

BS: I find it, at least as expressed, somewhat contradictory that you expressed such a large interest in consistency of character motivation before, and then as far as the Ka-Zar character said that you and Bruce weren't interested in continuity *per se*.

ANDERSON: **We changed the character. The character we had before would not lend itself to what Bruce and I thought were interesting stories. He always seemed like—I don't know—a blind dumb noble image within a story. He wasn't the center of a story. He wasn't the main character of a story, really. The impression I get from reading a lot of his old stories is that the writer would write a story and put Ka-Zar in it. Like the guy in the tank who was trying to get the anti-metal. [*SAVAGE TALES #1*]**

BS: And he and his wife had marital problems...

ANDERSON: **Right. That was the story they put Ka-Zar in. And Ka-Zar sort of became the dumb noble savage that was just injected into the story. The story was not about Ka-Zar, it was about this couple that had marital problems, and the wife who was a real bitch. So we changed Ka-Zar's character to give him motivation. Continuing the motivation as he was wouldn't produce interesting stories. So we felt justified in changing him.**

BS: Something that you said earlier was that you are not all that interested in continuity for continuity's sake, but that the idea that character's relationships to one another have to be maintained, and the bonds of the Marvel Universe have to be maintained and stuff like that, except if it doesn't contribute to the success of the actual story on hand.

ANDERSON: **Okay, maybe I should add an addendum to that. I don't think we should dwell upon trying to tie up the loose ends for other writers, other handlings of a particular character at the expense of a particular story. I'm a very *structured* type person. When I write a story, I like to have everything figured out before-hand, like where they are, who they are, and why they're doing what they're doing. In other words, their motivations should be logical based on their past, and their present, and what's happening to them. Bruce likes to be free enough to write stories, but tying them in, not only to Ka-Zar's past, but tying them in to my ideas, and to Weezy's ideas on the book (not to mention Jim Shooter, when he wants to interject something he thinks is important. It's tying for Bruce. He's forced to entertain all those ideas together in his original story which is incredibly constraining. Sometimes, it can affect the outcome of a story or completely ruin it. There's one example: Bruce wrote a *doppelganger* story about a kid who had seen Ka-Zar on the news when they first found The Savage Land. He really admired what Ka-Zar stood for as an ideal. Sort of a reversal of Ka-Zar's current view of himself. The kid hated the city and liked the jungle life. The ideal of it, having read Tarzan as a kid while growing up. Sort of seeing himself as Ka-Zar. The original idea was that he found his way to The Savage Land, and what basically happens is that Ka-Zar sees *himself* in the kid. A parody of himself. And the whole point of the story is *Ka-Zar finds himself.* It was a good story, but it just didn't seem to fit in with the direction the book was taking. It was changed and adapted, and finally came out as issue number four. Say, the Aryan traitor, became what the *doppelganger* had originally been, so the story was kind of diminished. It wasn't really the story Bruce had come up with. We're going to do the *doppelganger* story in a future issue but it'll be changed around a little bit. But as for your original question, about the continuity of a character. I think the continuity within one writer/artist team shouldn't suffer because of the continuity discrepancies from the previous team.**

BS: Each creative team should be judged on the basis of the work it contributes?

"The reason we called him Ka-Zar is because the business dictates we call him Ka-Zar."

GOOD QUESTION. NOW IF THIS WAS A NOVEL... I'D SIMPLY PRESS HERE AND...
KEVIN, DARLING, HOW DID YOU DO IT?
I'M PART JAPANESE, DIDN'T YOU KNOW?

© 1982 Marvel Comics

ANDERSON: Right. Stan Lee ironically wrote a *"Spider-Man"* story one time that had a title, *"Oh, What a Tangled Web We Weave..."* If you look at the entire **Marvel Universe, all the plotlines and all the stories that have been published since Marvel began, there's no way to tie all that together. There is no continuity—there is a *basic* continuity. Up at Ithicon, Mary Jo Duffy, Bob Layton, David Michelinie, Denny O'Neil, Roger Stern and myself were all talking about what's going to happen to Marvel Comics now that it's too big to be run by one person. The reason Marvel Comics was so successful in the 1960s was that Stan Lee controlled the plotlines of all the books, so he knew every month what character was doing what when, he could have cross-overs that jibed, so there was not a character appearing two places at the same time—there were few discrepancies. But now, Marvel's so big that they have at least *five* books with Spider-Man. Most, if not all, of them are written by different writers, drawn by different artists, and coming out every month. So, it would be a job in itself just to run rewrod on these five *"Spider-Man"* books to make sure they don't have him doing different things at the same time. So we talked about what's probably going to happen—the continuity thing is going to have to be subjugated. I think Marvel is getting so big that continuity's going to have to be more unimportant than the actual telling of the story by an individual artist/writer team. As long as the writer and artist stay within the characterization that's been established before, and if the motivations are logical and follow a logistical pattern, based on who the character is, and the way it's been developed over the years, I think they're going to have to sacrifice the latter of continuity.**

BS: That's pretty much what the question was in the first place. If the Ka-Zar character has been a certain way, with certain motivations, with a limited personality, not very interesting, do you feel justified, changing him as much as you have, to make him a more interesting character, and how much justification is there in calling this new fellow Ka-Zar?

ANDERSON: **Actually, Bruce and I talked about this at length. The reason we called him Ka-Zar is because the business dictates we call him Ka-Zar. The Ka-Zar name is a trademark, it's a property of Marvel. The fact that it's a different character has no bearing on the business end of the character. Just the fact that a book called *KA-ZAR* based on this blond pseudo-Tarzan who fights dinosaurs really has no bearing on the name Ka-Zar. Bruce and I could be writing a strip exactly like the character we have in *KA-ZAR* and call him something else. Call him Fred, call him anything. As far as justification for what we're doing with the character, I don't know, it's a subjective opinion that the character was not interesting before and we changed it.** I think "change" is not a good word.

BS: "Evolved?"

ANDERSON: **Yeah, an evolved character. I don't think we changed the character to such a degree that given the time in the interim between the last time that Ka-Zar was seen he couldn't have changed into the character he is now. I think he could have. We just did it rather abruptly.**

BS: Occasionally, writers write themselves into corners to the point at which they are not quite sure what the character's all about when they take ouer the book. And they have characters act and react in certain ways, then mail reaction comes in so negative and strong that there have to be scenes inserted saying, "Oh, well, I bumped my head that morning, and was off on some other tangent and basically wasn't myself." So it does seem at least, that the audience, the reacting audience, has a pretty firm grasp on character continuity. It might seem it undermines their faith in their dream world if the characters start acting in ways other than they always have.

ANDERSON: **I think a lot of that stems from the fact that Bruce was under the impression that he could do whatever he wanted to with the character. And being the kind of writer that Bruce is, he needs the freedom to write good stories.**

BS: Something that really interested me was that you comment that you really hadn't intended the story which became KA-ZAR #5 to come out. It was a plot you had back-logged that pretty much became #5, and that you did start getting better response to the new Ka-Zar character after some effort was apparent to explain the discrepancies between the two versions.

ANDERSON: **Actually, the letters that we got didn't express that bewilderment or confusion at all. I've read all the letters that have come in, and I think we received one letter which said, "I don't like the book because you changed the character." The general consensus of the letters has been, "I like the book**

because you changed the character." "This is not the Ka-Zar I saw several years ago, but I like him." "This Ka-Zar doesn't resemble the old Ka-Zar, but I think he's better." So there's really never any confusion over it except from professional circles, people who were associated with the character earlier. I'm not talking about the *creators*, the people who wrote or drew him, I'm talking about the editorial people. They said, "This is not Ka-Zar." They seemed caught up in the continuity thing, too, seeing to it that all Marvel comics fall along the same time frame. That's one reason that Bruce and I are trying to get the character out of the Marvel Universe, so to speak, and have him just be his own character, exist in his own world, react with his own adventure stories, meet his own new people, his own new races of people, new monsters, new virtues, etc., *etc.* Not only does this give us the freedom to write and draw what we're *really interested* in drawing, and writing, but we don't have to worry about the continuity of the past stories. So according to the general response, the new Ka-Zar is much more accepted. He's a more entertaining version of the character. By the end of this year, we will have taken a couple of stabs at explaining why he changed. Aside from those, I don't feel justified to do any more than that. If the book flopped, and nobody liked it because the character had changed, I would say, "Boy! We sure were presumptuous to have made this character as bad as we did and totally messed up the Marvel continuity time-line by introducing this new character and having him in print." But the fact that he changed is not necessarily a problem. I believe that change is the natural order of things. You can't keep things the same. That's what bothers me about television writing these days. The producers find something that's good, that sells, and they don't want to change it at all. So it doesn't change, it gets stagnant, falters, and it fails, and they can't figure out why. It's like trying to light a match the second time. "Well, it worked a second ago!" It's that kind of attitude. Things have to change, over a period of time. I'm not saying abrupt changes, which *KA-ZAR* appeared to be, but things change, and people change, and Ka-Zar will change, too, and *keep* changing. And keep getting more interesting—at least, I hope so.

BS: I'd like to have you describe the personalities of the lead players and how you particularly try and bring that out in only visuals.

ANDERSON: Only visuals... In the beginning of the series, Bruce's version of Ka-Zar and mine were generally the same. Overall, our view of the character, of the place he lives, his relationship with Shanna, with Leanne, in the early stories, and with Zabu, were generally the same. When I think of ideas—I think in fragments. Something interesting occurs to me and I'll log it away. And one day, something will spark it and I'll bring it forth again. I think in terms of details first. It is why I'm a structured person and like to build a story from the ground up, because I think in short bursts of scattered detail. My specifics of the characters in the Ka-Zar book were different from Weezie's and were different from Bruce's. Bruce had a direction he was thinking in, and I had all these neat ideas I wanted to do with the book. Overall, the general overview was the same, but then, when we got down to the specifics, the details, the book would respectively go off in different directions. We were painting each other into corners, so I decided to let Bruce take the book where he wanted it to go, and I would give him a little bit here and there and say, "How about this?", and I'd just throw it to him, and if he was excited about it, he'd use it. If not, he didn't. So when you ask how I see the characters, my version of Ka-Zar is probably different than Bruce's Ka-Zar, as far as the specifics go. The general overview is the same. Shanna is an independent woman. She likes what she does. She's a veterinarian who has found the prehistoric wildlife in The Savage Land (and now Pangea) to be of extreme interest to her as a doctor, and she also has a scientific mentality. She likes to study the animals. I felt that her motivation for going to The Savage Land in the first place should have been that she felt through studying the ancestors of the animals she does cure she'll get a better understanding of all veterinary medicine. By studying prehistoric wolves, she can learn better—possibly—to help present-day dogs or whatever.

BS: Does she eventually plan to return to civilization?

ANDERSON: I don't know. I don't even think she knows. Since she's met Ka-Zar, things have changed. But she's basically a very secure woman who likes what she does, and she likes where she lives. She knows how to cope with the jungle, on its own terms. She doesn't try to change it or bend it. She realizes her place where she is. Now, for anyone to do that, they have to be a strange kind of individual. Within the realities of comics, she's a unique woman. So, that's as far as Bruce and I agree on the character. I can go on and be alot more specific as to her character, but whether Bruce feels the same way or not, I don't know. She's basically a very together woman and she knows what she wants. Ka-Zar, on the other hand, is not together. He doesn't know what he wants. He's unsure of himself, he's unsure of his place in life. The only sure thing he has in his life is Zabu. Even his relationship with Shanna is still a big question. They like each other, and they enjoy each other's company, so there is a bond forming between them. I like the conflict there—the conflict between Shanna's security, and Ka-Zar's insecurity. And Zabu's kind of what's keeping Ka-Zar together. Because you've gotta realize, when Ka-Zar goes off to New York, Zabu is very out of place. I want to do a scene where he has to go through customs, and has to go through innoculations, and all that kind of stuff. I've got to check with the authorities and see what it is to bring a wild animal into the country. He'd be put in quarantine, something which Ka-Zar would not understand. "What is this? He's not gonna do anything wrong! I tell him what to do. He does what I tell him!"

BS: Zabu has made it into the country at least twice before, and no mention was made of bringing this "alien" saber-tooth into the United States or England.

ANDERSON: Right. And now Central Park has a leash law for any animal, I think. Ka-Zar has to obey the rules, so you can see Zabu on a leash, and people looking at him—"Hey! That's a ba-a-a-ad cat!"

BS: "Let's not mug this guy!"

ANDERSON: Right! I don't think this kind of thing is really exploited. We could make up some throw-away line, explaining that he got a special pass or visa or something, but it seems so superficial. So I think we'll treat Zabu's entrance to the United States this time as if it were his first—one of the little things the readers are going to have to allow for.

BS: Have you based these versions of these personalities, Ka-Zar, Shanna, Zabu, and Leanne on real people? Or real personalities you may have encountered?

ANDERSON: I don't write the book, that's Bruce's job, I would say you have to ask him that question. I would assume, though, especially with the love interest between the two characters, that Bruce is probably interjecting some of his own experiences, some of his own thoughts about love and romance and that whole thing. As far as the visuals of the characters—no, I see them as individuals themselves. It's a unique position, being creator of a character. Obviously, a character is going to be based on your own experience. Creating something is only the output of what has transpired in your own life. So visually, I try to make the characters unique. I try to treat them like they are real people, because I want that "realism" in a comic book. I want people to react to them as if they are real people. In #6, Ka-Zar gets stung by a giant scorpion called a Molle. He's dying and Shanna tries to save him. The way I draw Shanna facing the situation depends on the way I think she feels about Ka-Zar. She really loves him. She really feels something for him. Whatever love is. I've never been able to define the word, so I'm very hesitant to use it. But she feels a

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"Reference and research are big things with me."

great deal of—she has a great deal of feeling for Ka-Zar. So the look in her face has to be just right. As far as what "just right" is, that's very subjective. Whatever comes out, whatever I finally put down on the paper is what I feel is right. Someone might disagree—they might say this eyebrow should be a little more intense. But visually, the mood I want to get in any given panel should be based on the characters' emotions and what they're feeling.

BS: When you started out on the KA-ZAR book, what sort of references did you accumulate?

ANDERSON: Well, when I was thinking about doing the book, I thought, "Well, I need reference for dinosaurs. I'm going to need reference for jungles. I'll need reference for ruined civilizations," so I keep what's called a "morgue" file, which is a collection of photos and clippings and stuff from magazines and I can refer to those sometimes. But my "big cat" reference and my "jungle" reference was minuscule, and my "dinosaur" reference was non-existent, so I had to go out and actually buy books on dinosaurs. My main reference source is Burian. Burian is a reconstructionist. Through painting, he reconstructs prehistoric life. The book is called *CAVEMAN.* The "Zaba" reference was a big thing for me. I'm a slave to reference, I guess. I have a terrible memory for drawing things. If I don't continually draw one thing, I forget how to draw it, and that's unfortunate for an artist, I found out, because it forces me to constantly go back to the reference, thus wasting time. Reference is absolutely necessary in illustration but it's hardly ever used in comics! It would take too much time to reference any panel, but I use it as often as possible and whenever necessary. Reference and research are big things with me.

BS: Describe your average work day.

ANDERSON: I'm lazy. (Laughs)

BS: More on that.

ANDERSON: Yeah, I know. I work at night, late evening, into the early morning. I have this theory—every artist has a theory, right?—when people are awake and moving around during the day, and when I say people, I mean everybody, the entire population of the eastern seaboard, an incredible amount of energy is produced just thinking. These millions and millions of people just thinking at the same time creates a cloud of energy like mental static which goes away—or at least, is considerably minimized—when everyone is asleep. And I find my concentration is better at night. So based on that, here's my typical work day: I usually get up anywhere between ten and noon in the morning, sometimes the afternoon, depending on how late I stay up the night before. I'll take care of all my business before five, and generally get started before dinner—kinda laying out, figuring out what I have to work on. Then I'll have dinner, and work through most of the evening, unless there's something on television, one of those good shows which I religiously watch. I'll take a break and eat when I'm watching that, and get back to work, and maybe turn off the radio and listen to Johnny Carson's monologue while I'm working. I need a little white noise, a little subconscious noise in the background, but I can't concentrate with the television on. So when I'm working from my layouts, just pencilling, it doesn't take as much concentration as doing the layouts themselves. I usually work late, or early into the morning.

CF: About how many hours?

ANDERSON: I tried timing myself, and what happens is I get caught up in the drawing, and I lose track of the time. So then I forget when I started, when I took my breaks. If I had to estimate, I'd say a short day, I work about four hours. Don't get mad, Wood's! (Laughs) Long day, I'll work up to ten hours.

CF: And you say you lay the pages out, and go over and tighten them up later?

ANDERSON: I started doing this, and I may drop one step. Up until now, I did thumbnail drawings of the panel-to-panel continuity. I do them two inches by three inches for each page. I use a very sharp pencil, and I lay in the figure placement for the whole book beforehand so I can fit the story into the number of pages it has to fit into. Going back through it, I may change some things here and there—change a panel layout, move something from one page to another, you know—but I'll do the whole thing on these thumbnails first. From these, I'll sketch in the figures and indicate backgrounds with a non-photo blue pencil on the top by fifteen Marvel paper. Over the top of these blue roughed figures, I'll pencil the story. My theory is that if you can read the page at two by three inches, you'll have no trouble reading the page at printed comic book size. Which goes back to my theory about simplicity in comic books—which is why most of my comics pages are done with from four to seven panels maximum. I don't use any more than that, unless I'm using a cinematic effect for rapid movement. Then I'll pencil the pages, and that's pretty much my formula. I may eliminate the blue line step. I still have to thumbnail them because I don't feel real secure about trying to fit the story into the given number of pages without doing it all out first. Like I said, I'm a very structured person. I can't imagine how people like Jack Kirby did it. He's a genius, I guess. Every artist develops his own method of drawing comics by trial and error. It took me four or five full stories to develop mine and it's changing even now. Two years down the road, I could be block-printing my pages—who knows?

A Romance Of Violence

"I used to swipe a lot when I first broke into the field. I had nothing to fall back on because I was so poorly trained. I had all this tremendous expression yearning for release and I didn't have the technical skill with which to articulate it. If I did something on my own, the idea would be good but the expression would be absolutely miserable.

One of the reasons for that is that I started as a penciller and stayed a penciller, instead of starting as an inker and then converting to pencilling. As an inker, you pick up all the external tricks you need to succeed with an editor. That is, you learn to create a professional-looking finished picture; not that the composition is any good, not that the figure articulation is any good, but the rendering of the picture ultimately is strong and sure. You learn how to draw and how to spot your blacks; those are the two most pragmatic things that you have to learn when you first start. And I never learned how to draw in those early days, and to this day I have trouble spotting blacks."

—Gil Kane on the hazards of a beginner to John Benson, **Alter Ego 10**

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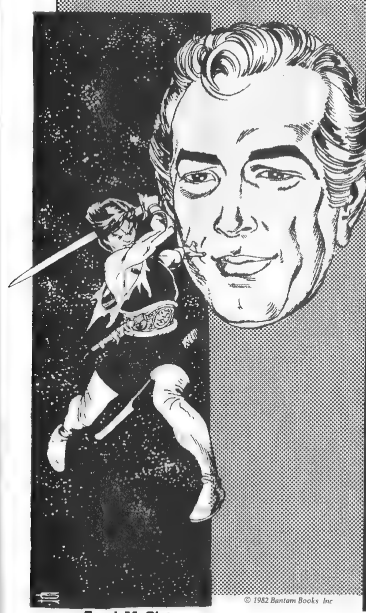
THE ART OF GIL KANE



Frank McGinty

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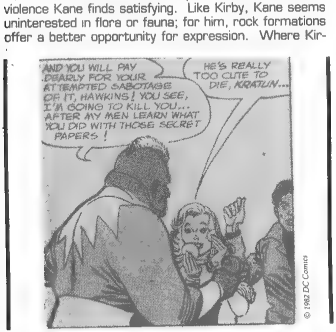
Cartoonists are usually identified in the public imagination by their most obvious tricks of the trade. Mention Harold Gray, and one thinks of Annie's vacant pupils; Chester Gould, and Dick Tracy's chiselled chin comes to mind. The same litmus test can easily be applied to Kirby, Kubert, Ditko, or any number of others. And Gil Kane? His name evokes images of twisted bodies, cutaway torsos, floating heads and wooden nostrils. An unfair association, of course, because Gil Kane has been one of the more productive artists in the comic book field, a man who works hard and who thinks hard about his work. The high regard in which Kane is held by his fellow professionals should indicate that his work contains more than just a handful of tricks. Moreover, now that the Adams cult is finally loosening its grip on the imaginations of would-be cartoonists, Kane's work is an inspiration to many younger artists. And yet, something is missing. It's true that every artist has some limitation on the range of material with which he is able to deal, and in some respects even Kirby's art, with all its tremendous power, is surpassed, out-punched, by Kane's work. But only in some respects. In too many areas, Kane's work is curiously unsatisfying when compared to that of Jack Kirby, Joe Kubert, or even John Severin. What's wrong—and what's right?

Kane boasts that he has worked for every comics house there ever was, a claim that's not too hard to credit. After all, a short list of Kane's output includes work on Wildcat, Nighthewk, Matt Savage, **Hopalong Cassidy**, Johnny Thunder, **Strange Adventures, Mystery in Space, Rex the Wonder Dog** (1), **Green Lantern, The Atom,** Captain America, The Hulk, **Thunder Agents, Undersea Agent,** filler pages for **Creepy, Plastic Man,** Batman, **Metal Men, Teen Titans, Captain Action, Hawk and Dove,** Batgirl, Robin, **Flash, House of Mystery, Captain Marvel,** Outlaw (in the second **All Star Western**), **Amazing Spider-man,** Conan, **Warlock,** Gullivar of Mars, Black Panther, The Inhumans, The Defenders, **What If?, John Carter, Marvel Team-Up,** and **Daredevil,** to say nothing of other stories for **Aventure, Weird Western, Weird Mystery, Supernatural Thrillers, Worlds Unknown,** and **Time Warp.** In addition, editors have found Kane's talents valuable for use on covers, so you can add stints as cover artist for **Strange Adventures** and **Mystery in Space** (until 1960) and as chief cover artist for Marvel (in the early seventies). In the past few years, he has produced the stylish Star Hawks newspaper strip, and for a while drew the Sunday Tarzan page. Even this list excludes the bulk of his work for the minor publishers of the forties, and a true completist could undoubtedly uncover volumes more work. Certainly there is more Kane artwork than one of meager resources can keep up with.

A Kane story is, more often than not, immediately identifiable, as his art cannot easily be disguised by any inker, no matter how unsympathetic or how incompetent. For years, the artist's overwhelming interest has been the human figure in action. Once seen, Kane's taut figures, frozen in moments of utmost exertion and twisted maniacally, are not quickly forgotten. Bodies are distorted for maximum impact; flesh and bone become jagged surfaces of wood or steel, rippling muscle turned

MOMENTS LATER, INSIDE...
HAWKINS' TIN GIRL FRIDAY CUT A HOLE THROUGH THE STEEL WITH HER FINGERTIPS! BLAST 'EM DOWN, BOYS...
NICE WORK METAL MAIDEN-- NOW I'LL TAKE OVER...
© 1982 DC Comics

into shaved sinew. Forms are bent and snapped into impossibly strenuous positions, yet retain weight and balance. Kane prefers that his characters carry no excess baggage, and likes to keep them lean. Villains and monsters, however, are often terrifically, yet convincingly, massive, looking as if they've wandered in from a Kirby page. Unlike many younger artists, Kane has not worked out his own interpretations of anatomy and then treated other elements of the continuity in a conventional or perfunctory manner. On the contrary: everything in his art works towards the expression of the kind of violence Kane finds satisfying. Like Kirby, Kane seems uninterested in flora or fauna; for him, rock formations offer a better opportunity for expression. Where Kir-


AND YOU WILL PAY DEARLY FOR YOUR ATTEMPTED SABOTAGE OF IT, HAWKINS! YOU SEE, I'M GOING TO KILL YOU... AFTER MY MEN LEARN WHAT YOU DID WITH THOSE SECRET PAPERS!
HE'S REALLY TOO CUTE TO DIE, KRATLIN...
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by's stones are massive and broken, Kane's feature smooth surfaces, sheared and hewn into twisted forms. Architecture, too, reflects and enhances this harshness: although contemporary stories depict the Depression-era skyscrapers of New York (even though the story may be set in California, the Midwest, or Western Europe), fantastic settings, whether futuristic or primitive, are dominated by huge concrete bunkers, sharp of line and sparse of decoration. The art—all of the art—seems infused by a cold, deliberate, and furious violence of passion.

Such thoroughness is not achieved overnight. Like most young cartoonists of the forties, Kane moved from one publisher to another while struggling to master the basics of the medium. His first work for National seems to have been a less than distinguished "Wildcat"; nonetheless, Kane stayed on to become one of the mainstays of the Julius Schwartz stable, even as the costumed heroes were fading into oblivion. It was during this period, the early fifties, that the artist (simultaneously, it seemed, with the rest of his generation) achieved the primary plateau of comics, namely, simple competance in drawing and presentation. Kane was put to work pencilling **Rex** when Alex Toth left the series, took over "Nighthawk" from Ruben Moreira, drew **Hopalong Cassidy** when National acquired the title from Fawcett, and churned out volumes for **Strange Adventures** and **Mystery in Space.** Little of this material was really notable, though reasons for this spring readily to mind. At that time, artists had little input into the short, formulated stories they were called upon to illustrate; probably Kane could not feel himself too involved in the work. Furthermore, his editor, like most of those at National, had a marked preference for polished, slick inkers like the Barry brothers, who gave the art a smooth house look, even when the pencillers were as diverse as Kane, Toth or Mort Drucker. Thirty years later, the situation seems anomalous: Kane has long had an abiding interest in science fiction, yet his work on **M.I.S.** and **S.A.** was on a par with his art for **Rex.** One of the westerns—"Matt Savage, Trail Boss"—stood out from the others, with episodes twice the usual length and better than average stories (by Gardner Fox); while it was somewhat better drawn than his other material, Kane evidently expended no more storytelling effort on this series than he did on tedium like Nighthawk.

One series which did eventually benefit from an extra effort was "Johnny Thunder", which Kane both pencilled and inked for a time. Even here, results are variable: panel arrangements, for the most part, consist of the standard three tiers of two panels apiece, with minor and major frames allotted the same amount of space. The drawing tends to be stiff and somewhat clumsy, the inking imprecise. Shading is ineffective, composed of massed pen strokes which fail to convey any depth or contour. Practice did help, though. "The Gauntlet of

Thunder" (**All Star Western** no. 104; story by Robert Kanigher?) is a masterpiece of Kane's early career, the culmination of a decade's work. In this story, everything seems to come together: layout is varied, attractive, and conducive to effective storytelling. Drawing is tighter than before, with figures worked out completely, beautifully. Facial expressions are vivid. For once the inking is deft and sharp, without excess linework and with good use of solid blacks for shadows and silhouettes. Thunder himself, with his black jeans, buckskin jacket and dark, wavy hair, is a dashing figure. Kane is able to make him seem jaunty even in repose, but it's during the gun-fights that the artist and his hero show their mettle. These poses are perfect: Thunder explodes into action, charging down an alleyway, diving and turning in mid-air. All this is done with the utmost control. Each picture is carefully composed, each pose convincing. Indeed, the only possible complaint would be that Kane's control is too perfect. During even the most intense action sequences, the reader seems more likely to admire the work than to become involved with it. To some extent, this is understandable. The writer determined how many frames per page there would be; this was not subject to the artist's interpretation. The fights aren't free-swinging brawls, but short gun battles in which the villains have their guns shot out of their hands in trite and true Lone Ranger fashion. All things considered, Kane did the best job possible with the material at hand and working under the conditions of the time. The disappointment lay in the fact that he wouldn't equal this work for several years.

This brief flowering of Kane's art was soon ended. The last issues of **All Star Western** featured longer Thunder stories, now written by Gardner Fox and inked by Joe Giella. Gone was the distinctive costume, replaced by a standard hat with a red and blue outfit. Gone, too, were the tight drawing and high-impact inking. The feature was now better written, but the art slipped back into dullness.

It was during this time that National, led by Schwartz, put more emphasis on the super-hero. With the success of the second Flash, the logical move was to revamp another popular star of the All-American house, Green Lantern. Schwartz handed the assignment to Kane, who designed a new costume, drew three **Showcase** tryouts, and the following series. The Kane/Giella **GL** was no more distinguished than the earliest Infantino/Giella **Flash**, each artist taking some time to make the considerable adjustments necessary to adapt to the super-guys after working on radically different strips. For Kane, the inking didn't help. The stories in **Green Lantern** were, though stodgily paced, innovative for the time, but while Kane's visual habits are there (the criminals all wear pork-pie hats), on the whole the art seems featureless. GL flies in an approved Superman pose, backgrounds barely exist, page design consists almost entirely of the familiar three-by-two panel arrangement, and the individual frames seem to be exclusively medium-level shots. Even if there were anything special in the pencils--and there doesn't seem to be--then inker Giella's smooth, even brushwork would have eliminated it. In sum, accomplished tedium--but the next assignment was slightly different.

When The Atom debuted in 1961, Kane's art showed a distinct improvement over the work appearing concurrently in **GL**, due in large part to the inking of Murphy Anderson. It also seems evident that Kane himself devoted more effort and enthusiasm to this new feature which, according to some reports, he had a more direct hand in creating. In any case, the very nature of the strip demanded visuals different from those in most DC strips of the day. Green Lantern, after all, merely had to wave his ring to wrap up a case; the Flash's attainment of faster-than-light speeds seemed effortless. The Atom, on the other hand, relies exclusively on physical power. Indeed, he had to expend considerable amounts of energy simply to get from one side of the room to the other! This, coupled with the necessarily realistic and detailed settings, offered Kane ample opportunity for the depiction of violent action and experiments with the human figure.

Even so, Kane's art on **The Atom** still worked mainly towards "correct" drawing rather than exciting continuities. For every panel with the hero throwing his body behind a punch, you can find several which are completely static--even when they're supposed to be action-packed. The most active poses seem isolated in the page, frozen amidst conventional designs. By 1964, however, Kane's stories were benefitting from a much more dynamic approach, as the artist began to employ more creative layout, a greater variety of compositional tricks. The action quotient increased appreciably. Compare, for instance, **Atom** no. 7 with no. 12: both are drawn quite well, but the difference between the two is the difference between merely clear layout, and good, exciting story flow.

There were a number of factors at work during this

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period that altered Kane's art, among them the assignment of Sid Greene as his regular inker, first on **Atom** and then on **GL**. Greene's chief recommendation was his evident enthusiasm, evinced by the wealth of detail he put into his art (and the numberous in-jokes which he sneaked into backgrounds). By no stretch of the imagination could he be considered a "slick" inker; Greene put down a darker, firmer line than most of the DC inkers, spotting his blacks with care. His chief drawback was that he habitually over-rendered, filling up drawings with more feathering than was necessary, and that he simply was not as technically proficient as the other inkers. Greene couldn't really finesse a line, and routinely butchered faces with heavy-handed rendering. His inks could often smother the pencils under a mass of linework, as was the case on several Infantino/Greene collaborations. On Kane's pages, though, he wrought wonders. Suddenly the art had a completely new look about it, with higher light and dark contrasts, more detail, and more complete figure work, muscles now standing out. The change was most marked on **Green Lantern**: readers who picked up **GL** no. 29, Greene's first issue, must hve thought that Coast City had been completely rebuilt between issues. Both titles benefitted immensely from his contribution; to judge from subsequent improvement in the drawing and storytelling, Kane must have felt the same way.

A more profound influence was the result of what was taking place in the fledgling Marvel line. Kane had always had the highest regard for Jack Kirby, who was at this time entering the phase of his career for which he would become most famous. After a long fallow period, Kirby was loosening up, combining his considerable training with the searing power of his forties output, and rewriting the rules of what made for "acceptable" comics. Next in importance was Steve Ditko who, originally a disciple of Mort Meskin, had become a virtual school-unto-himself, with a completely unique approach. Kane expressed admiration for Ditko's atmospherics on "Dr. Strange", and in fact, in any Kane story that deals with arcane lore and other dimensional travel, the use of Ditkoisms is fairly obvious. For the most part, though, such effects were and are beyond Kane's grasp. The common ground between the two artists was the Burne Hogarth influence that was increasingly clear in **Spiderman**. Ditko's mastery of figure articulation was the sort of thing closest to Kane's interests; as Kane himself enthused, "the figure continuity was perfect, clear as a bell.".

The result of these developments was that Kane's art became supercharged with power, the vivid result of fresh enthusiasm, and he was soon hailed by readers as DC's master of "action art". In a short space of time, he changed from being a reasonably good artist to an excellent one. A quick glance at books like **Green Lantern** no. 37 or **Atom** no. 19 shows how slim, how beautifully taut; the figures have become, how dynamic the poses are, how well designed and paced the pages are. In 1965 and '66, Kane maintained a balance between excitement and control: while the quality of the art clearly varies from story to story, it never falls off by very much.

Good story flow and varied layouts, combined with Greene's attention to detail, make even the profusion of medium-level shots exciting. The work is a long way from perfection--there are too many botched faces and slightly askew limbs for that--but the issues of **GL** and **Atom**, if not aesthetically innovative or demanding, fulfill the quintessential criterion for comics: they're a good read. It was not to last; events were conspiring to put an end to the controlled, "classical" look of comics, and thus to this phase of Kane's career.

Evidently part of Kane's enthusiasm expressed itself in a desire to produce work that was his from start to finish, as his assignments for editors other than Schwartz (Start Hawkins for Schiff, Capt. America and the Hulk for Lee, and **Thunder Agents**) involved inking as well as pencilling. After those jobs, Kane inked a year's worth of **Green Lantern** (issues 50 through 57). Deterioration was immediate. Storytelling and general layout actually became less interesting with Kane doing the complete job, and the drawing seemed to go out of control. What purpose was served by having GL turn into a heavy, musclebound character with pawlike hands and limbs that expand and contract from panel to panel? No doubt the sudden move to a smaller page size compounded the problems, and it may be that the overwhelming influence of Kirby at this time cased Kane, as it caused several other artists, to try and beef up his characters. Whatever the reasons, the work, though necessary practive, is unattractive and dissatisfying in the extreme.

Clearly the artist was suffering from problems of transition-transition of working conditions (the reduced size of original art) and transition of style. The best and worst of this period are on view in **His Name is Savage**, a black and white magazine-sized comic dealing with the then-popular espionage motif. All text in **Savage** was type-set, necessitating a somewhat different approach to page design, and indeed, the layout does seem quite unlike any comic book work up to that time, **Mad** included. Kane's visualization of the story is more consistently careful than any of his previous work: there is a more detailed consideration of timing, and the reader is not left to infer movement between frames, as was often the case with the DC material. Surely some credit for this is due to Kane's writer, Archie Goodwin, someone more sensitive to visuals and pacing than Broome or Fox. More importantly, artist and writer didn't work in separate cubicles, the labour divided neatly between them. Kane was involved in the plotting and conception of the story, even in the design and marketing of the book. From start to finish, **Savage** was Kane's project, the assistance and collaboration of others notwithstanding.

As for the book's contents: at the time, Kane's art was still undergoing the transitional development already mentioned, and while the work for this project is a vast improvement over the all-Kane **GLs**, some of the same problems hadn't yet been resolved. Faces, for instance, are dominated by overly large mouths, eyes that are consistently too far apart, and too well-defined upper lips. Kane has always had trouble registering facial types, but it was only in the middle 1960s that his faces assumed such strange proportions: this particular problem would, in a short time, be resolved. In a story that (inevitably) contains so many head shots and close-ups, though, it's an annoying flaw. The design of the book, innovative as it was, still relies too heavily on a grid system in which all the art is confined to the interior of

the frame, and there is no real reason why this should be so–indeed, there is every reason why elements of the art should, at some points in a story, be moved out of the frame and allowed to predominate. Again, this was something with which Kane, and many other artists, would deal in short order. At the time, he seemed content to rework the standard "panelled" approach. As it stands, **Savage's** design accomodated text far better than the usual comic book, with its obtrusive yellow boxes.

This was also the first time that Kane had done any large amount of work for black and white reproduction, which, of course, offers more opportunities for expression than colour comics. The artists on the early Warren magazines, for instance, worked in various media–wash, charcoal pencil, markers–which gave the art a nice finish and a lot of variety. Kane, on the other

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hand, opted for standard comics line drawings, using mechanical tones to give the art depth and contrast. At first glance, they give a nice effect, but in the course of a forty-page story, they become somewhat monotonous. More jarring is the use of type instead of hand lettering. This too seems, to a casual reader, orderly and attractive; certainly, it meshes well with the tones. Even when used for narrative, it seems not unsuitable. But when one reads drawn panels with typed word balloons, the effect is disconcerting, ugly. The use and placement of work balloons has been a consistent problem in comics ever since adventure strips first appeared: do they intrude upon the art, or do they make for more immediate presentation? Kane's solution, really the EC solution, seems the worst of both worlds, with the created, self-sufficient world of the cartoonist invaded by cold type.

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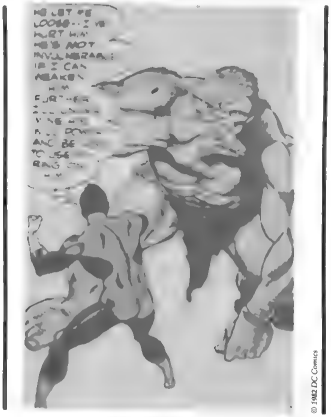
Copious use of pulpish narration only serves to weaken the suspension of disbelief, creating for the reader a mental picture which is at odds with the stylised ones beneath the captions.

As noted previously, the shift to a 10" x 15" page size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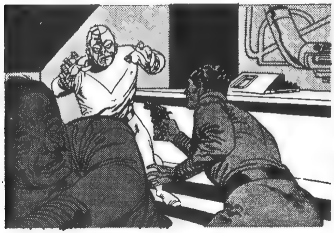
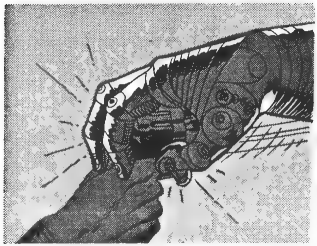
for original art put an end (for a while, at least) to the subtler, more detailed, better balanced look of comic books, as artists scrambled to adjust to the new situation. Not surprisingly, it was Jack Kirby who was first to take advantage of this state of affairs. With less room for detail (and, one suspects, with less and less plot being handed him by his writer), Kirby simply drew fewer—and hence, bigger—pictures. Where the typical comic book had averaged five or six frames to the page, **Fantastic Four** and **Thor** started to carry four or three. Readers may have felt cheated by the decreased amount of story in each book, but with the kind of explosive spectacle on view, few complained. Once the single most influential comics artist of the time began something, could others be far behind? So great an admirer of Kirby as Kane could hardly remain unaffected by this major development; his reactions are on view in **Captain Action**, an odd, short-lived title published by National. Kane drew the second issue (from a Jim Shooter script) for Mort Weisinger, and both wrote and drew the last three for Julius Schwartz. Wally Wood was the inker, Kane himself inking the fourth issue and part of the third. In these books, figures are knocked flying across the breadth of the page, bodies twist with frenetic exertion and throw wall-crushing punches. With a more freewheeling approach to page design, the figurework is freed from the restriction of tiny panels and becomes awesome. These traits were increasingly visible in Kane's other work, but what sets **Capt. Action** apart from **Teen Titans, Hawk & Dove**, or his second stint on **Green Lantern** is the care and control evinced therein. Even with all that smashing, furniture-busting violence, any distortion is deliberate. Rarely does a page seem dashed off or incomplete. Backgrounds don't suddenly vanish at some arbitrary point within a frame. While the other series had very obvious ups-and-downs from one issue to the next, the work on **Capt. Action** is consistent. Such was the control effected that the problems that had plagued **Savage** and the work immediately preceding it were largely resolved. The lead characters were once more lithe, slim, the faces resumed more satisfying proportions. It was also at this

The rage in the General's voice boiled into motion. Suddenly he was in front of the desk, a hulking engine of destruction, lunging toward the pair whose faces went sallow with fear. As the gleaming metal arm thrust toward them, they knew they must fight, or run, or die!

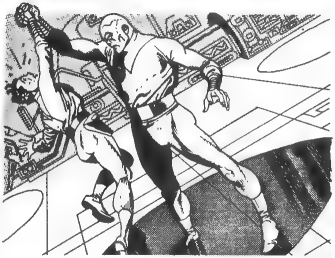


The automatic, desperately clutched in a sweat-drenched hand bucked once, then twice at the awesome, advancing figure...But only the reverberating whine of richocheting bullets followed the roar of gunfire...

There was no chance for a third shot. The mechanized arm darted forward and huge, strong fingers of steel encircled gun and hand...Then like some giant trap being sprung, clamped shut!



And with a surging, powerful jerk that brought an audible crack from the socket of his victim's arm, the General hoisted the squirming, crying man off the floor...



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point that Kane began using his infamous "floating heads". On this series at least, they were not used mindlessly as a substitute for careful storytelling.

Kane's art was the sole recommendation for another obscure title, Marvel's ersatz **Captain Marvel**, of which Kane drew five ill-fated issues. If Action and Co. did strange and wonderful things to classical hero superstructure, Mar-Vell and Rick Jones went even further afield. While there is some terrific drawing in these books, there is not the same consistency that's on view in **Capt. Action**: the brilliant and thrilling resides page by page with the preposterous. Marvel's all-purpose stooge, Rick Jones, has a face so sharply carved that, in some panels, he's easily mistaken for Howdy Doody. The hero's slim build works well in some of the action sequences, but in several drawings his frame is less reminiscent of a superhero's than it is of Gandhi's after a hunger strike. On the whole, the last three issues of the runnos. 19 through 21—are more satisfying than the first two. **Marvel** is more manic than **Action**, pitched at a higher, more furious tone. There is a loss of detail, especially in the backgrounds, which become sparser, more linear. The figures are brought up into the foreground, and dominate the art even more than before. It was at this point that Kane threw off the burden of realism and subsumed all the elements of his work into his own frantic vision of tortured violence. The **Savage** book, while featuring a striking solution to the design problems of a black and white magazine, had fairly conventional layout inside the frames. Even in **Captain Action**, where the figures dominate the page, there are plenty of detailed street scenes. In **Captain Marvel**, all this drops away. For Kane, realistic detail was a distraction, as he had little interest in detail and none at all in realism. His brief fling with Kirbyesque architecture, visible in **Captain Marvel** no. 17, was finished by the time he left the book; and his machinery concepts, borrowed quite obviously from Wood, began a gradual metamorphosis into simpler, less cluttered objects. Replacing these was a purity of form and line—the Toth influence—that clarified Kane's art and stated more directly his real interests.

Blackmark was Kane's second "outside" project, a swords-and-pseudo-science paperback published by Bantam in 1971, which essentially drew together many of the developments in non-series stories which has appeared in **Conan** and **House of Mystery** at the turn of the decade. It began as a projected series of three books. Evidently, two books were completed, and work begun on a third; of these, Bantam released only the first, and then terminated the project. The first book was subsequently serialised in **Savage Sword of Conan** (issues 1 through 4), while the second eventually saw print in **Marvel Preview** no. 17. For this series, Kane took the same basic approach as he did with **Savage**—typeset text and line drawings with mechanical tones—but had to revamp it somewhat to accomodate the switch from magazine to paperback format. Accordingly, each page contains no more than three drawings, and, more frequently, only two or one. The more open tableaux of the two Captains, **Action** and **Marvel**, are much in evidence as well, and to good effect.

Where **Savage** represented an attempt to climb on a bandwagon, **Blackmark** was Kane's stab at anticipating one. At the time, sword-and-sorcery, or "heroic fantasy", had yet to establish itself firmly in the marketplace, though several attempts to do so [**e.g.**, Ballantine's "adult fantasy" reprints] were being made. Presumably Bantam was willing to test the waters; for the artist, it was simply a chance to draw the kind of material which had always interested him. Kane was a fan of the old adventure and science fiction pulps, and at one point nearly succeeded in securing the comic book rights to Conan. Even more than westerns, the heroic and the primitive fire Kane's imagination and invest his art with real imaginative power. Some cartoonists are able to take the mundane objects of daily life and make them interesting or notable, but for Kane, such things were more a hindrance than anything else. It is in **Blackmark** that Kane succeeds in creating a world of his own, that universe of sheared, raw landscapes, rearing citadels, and lean, contorted figures that bear his stamp as much as the claustrophobic dimensions of Dr. Strange bear that of Ditko.

This is not to say that **Blackmark** is an unqualified success. Though the material may have been ideal, the working conditions evidently were not. Cut corners are easily spotted. The Adams panels don't stand out as much as one might expect, but they are still rather jarring: the plasticised fleshiness of his characters tends to detract from the lean brutality of Kane's. For that

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matter, Kane's own work in the book isn't consistent, and there are panels where the figures become merely gawky, as was the case with Captain Mar-Vell. One example is a shot of young Blackmark's face from below the chin. The bridge of the nose and the orbits are carelessly worked out, and the result is an unconvincing drawing. At other points, there is a loss of discipline and e consequent busyness is the rendering, as with the frontispiece for the fourth chapter. As far as sheer drawing is concerned, the. second book--"The Mind Demons"--is much the better of the two, with complete, beautifully worked out compositions. [Unfortunately, the superiority is not as clear as it might be. The Marvel printing contains many drawings that are blown up beyond their intended publication size; in these frames, the linework is muddied and imprecise, the tones distracting.] At no point does the art slough off into sketchiness, and there is a more conscientous approach to the subtler aspects of the work, such as the supporting characters and costuming.

Blackmark's major problems, however, have more to do with the format than the quality of the drawing. What is most distressing about the books is how often the work becomes a series of illustrations rather than a continuity. There is much less panel-to-panel action than in, say, the **Savage** book, and it's hard to understand why Kane would intentionally set out to nullify one of his greatest talents, the ability to create the illusion of movement. The text and illustration format, while useful for establishing background and building story detail, only hampers the flow of reading, particularly during the climactic arene sequence in the first book and the head-to-head battle at the end of the second. This approach also shows Kane's art at its weakest, in a way: his single illustrations are just not subtle enough to hold the eye for any length of time. This results in the reader spending more time on the captions than on the art and, as in **Savage**, creates for the reader a conflict between the two. One sympathizes with Kane's desire to pack the story with what he habitually refers to as "information", with the thoughts, emotions and sensations of the characters, but the method employed is not really successful. Certainly this format seems inferior to the traditional dramatised narrative of comics.

In the period following the release of the **Blackmark** paperback, Kane became a regular at Marvel, and the hard-won achievements of that and earlier projects were applied to the comic books with varying degrees of care. The almost literally blasphemous **Warlock (Marvel Premiere** 1 & 2; **Warlock** 1-5] received nice treatment, and his work on **Spider-man**, if not his best, was still admirably suited to the character. In addition, Kane drew several adaptations of sf and pulp adventure stories; of these, probably the best was the book-length comics version of Robert E. Howard's "Valley of the Worm" [inked by Ernie Chan] that appeared in **Supernatural Thrillers** no. 3. Unfortunately, his **Conan**, a feature for which he seemed ideally suited, never seemed to achieve what it should have: **Conan** no. 17 [inked by Ralph Reese] and no. 18 [Dan Adkins, Kane's inker on **Warlock**] are creditable jobs, but "The Night of the Dark God" (**Savage Tales** no. 4], team-inked by Adams, Colletta, McLaughlin and Marcos, suffers from sloppy composition and a very poor finish, while the multi-part adaptation of "The Hour of the Dragon"/**Conan the Conquerer (Giant-Size Conan)** seemed to suffer from the artist's diminished interest: each successive installment falls somewhat below its immediate predecessor [in fact, Kane never did last out the story, and it was left to John Buscema to complete the adaptation in **Savage Sword of Conan**]. Kane did less and less series work at Marvel, and drew a lot of one-shots and fill-ins, and this presumably did little to improve his work; nor did his stint dashing off sketches for nearly all of Marvel's covers improve matters. Whatever the cause, Kane's work at this time featured sloppy drawing more often than not, with pointless overuse of his favorite tricks. It was during this period that Kane's propensity for drawing tilted heads and flaring nostrils became not merely pronounced, but actually irritating. Montages were used more and more frequently, to less and less effect. Of the deliberate precisions and raw fury which characterize his best work, Marvel readers, by and large, got only the latter.

The Star Hawks feature was Kane's personal Great

Leap Forward, the project in which his control was reunited with his considerable storytelling powers and combined with a new, cleaner approach to rendering, marking a new refinement in Kane's style. The strip, written initially by Ron Goulart and distributed by N.E.A. was done in an unusual double-sized format consisting of two tiers. With considerably more freedom to design his dailies than most strip artists, Kane frequently played with panel arrangements, giving surprising variety to the generally static shape of newspaper strips. If he was dismayed by the structures of the grid system, it didn't show. Inside the frames, the frequent crudities and hysterical tone of much of the Marvel material were replaced by beautiful control and a lovely linear quality in the inking (although Kane was actually using markers by now). The panels—notably those from the first story—are carefully layered, with fore, middle and backgrounds given just the right amount of detail to make the art seem complete and keep the story flowing at the same time. Kane is also more successful than usual at creating perspective and depth of field, chiefly through careful layout. One example is the use of a defining dark object in the foreground: Kane had, of course, employed this trick earlier in his career [see the cover of **Green Lantern** no. 57], but only fitfully. Indeed, he once criticised artists who relied too heavily on cropping, when it's quite possible that he didn't use this particular variant often enough. In Star Hawks, though, it's employed frequently, and to good effect.

What's most notable about the strip-and again, the earliest examples are the best ones—is the sheer beauty of the drawing. The figures are lean and taut as ever, the exertion and power of the poses clear, but unlike much of the earlier work, they never become frantic or preposterously bonely. The characters display a good range of facial types, from the lean good looks of Jaxon to the rough peasant features of Chavez and the sly, affable chubbiness of Chatterbox. There is plenty of detail, but it is detail of conception, imaginative detail that gives the figures and objects distinction and identity, and it's present in the architecture, the landscape, the machinery. It is not the kind of detail that is born of overrendering and overwhelming decoration. The cliches of Kane's art simply aren't in evidence here. Star Hawks is a masterpiece of concentration; one feels that Kane has successfully brought all his interests and influences to bear on the material, displaying his utter mastery of anatomy and movement, of perspective, and his considerable storytelling ability. Best of all, the work is seamless: no elements predominate at the expense of others, and the art has a unique "look" about it, the mark of a distinct and successful resolution to the inking problem.

Kane's art has developed over the years, at times expressing certain qualities at the expense of others. Apart from the deficiencies engendered by overwork or lack of interest in the material, however, there are recurring features in Kane's work which can legitimately be considered as failings, and which often prevent a wholehearted enjoyment of the work. Most obvious of these problems is that of the inking. Kane has never made any bones about his limitations as an inker; on the other hand, he has never been successfully paired with an artist who could serve as his regular inker. Kane's pencils have been rendered by any number of artists, but one would be hard pressed to select the one best suited to finish his art. Most of the assignments have undoubtedly been made on the basis of simple expediency, but there must have been times when editors scratched their heads, wondering who they could try next on Kane. Some, like Vince Colletta or Joe Giella, have simply obliterated the work: it's obviously still Kane's art, but the perfunctory rendering reduces its impact, and the reader's emotional involvement, to a minimum. One of the best examples of the damage thoughtless or unsuitable inking can do [and there are plenty to choose from in the Kane oeuvre] is "The Golden Obelisk of Qward" from **Green Lantern** no. 75. This was Kane's farewell to the series, and it's evident that he went all out to create a raw, barbaric mood to match the setting, and to sustain a level of drawing not present in previous issues. Giella, the title's original inker, inked the book, and his loose, smooth brushwork fairly saps the life out of the pencils—it isn't so much bad as it is wrong. Probably Giella would have applied the same clean, professional rendering no matter who did the pencils. It's possible to "see under" the rendering enough to realize the quality of the originals — poor inking cannot disguise good composition—but one can only guess at the

Blackmark paused a moment before shouting his demand; paused before calling down the Warlord he'd dreamed of facing for fifteen years; paused to relish the time of vengeance at hand. And in that moment, the woman whose favors he'd scorned leaned forward to Kargon.

He MUST die, my Lord! A Champion like that can rally armies, topple kingdoms...!
But the rules of the Games..
You're my King, my husband! You're ABOVE all rules...Even your own!
You win only what Kargon grants, barbarian! And I grant you.. DEATH!
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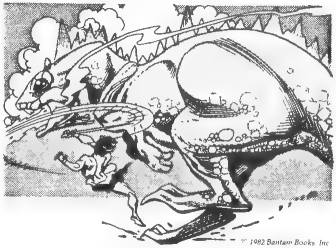
sensations that might have been stirred by a more appropriate finish.

With top flight inkers like Murphy Anderson and Wally Wood, the problem was almost the opposite. The final product was beautiful, even lush, in a way Kane's own work never is, and, one supposes, in a way he never wished the work to be. Both men softened the harsher aspects of the art, fleshing out skeletal frames and imparting greater weight and solidity to the figures. Of the two, Anderson was actually the more dominating, overlaying the pencils with his distinctive feathering and fine brushwork. Wood's inks don't seem to overwhelm the pencils with (largely superfluous) detailing, as is the case with Anderson's inks, even though they are a far cry from Kane's own stripped-down ink line (for some reason, the Kane/Wood art shows more clearly the influence of Hogarth, with classically-modelled heads and bodies; check the villain, Krellik, in **Captain Action** no. 2). Innumerable others have inked Kane's pencils, with the results sometimes being quite attractive, but few have been able to preserve the "flavour" of the originals.

There were, undoubtedly, numerous readers who preferred to see Kane's art filtered through the sensibility of an artist like Wood. Kane, however, evidently wished to project qualities of texture as well as composition, and must have felt the need to finish the art in a way consistent with his aesthetic goals. His own inking preserves his vision with sharp, sure pen lines. Indeed, he seems to have worked almost entirely in pen, using a brush sparingly, if at all. Some of the "Johnny Thunder" stories show this off to good effect, as do the "Star Hawkins" jobs he did for Jack Schiff's **Strange Adventures**. Later, he followed the lead of Alex Toth and began finishing covers for Marvel western reprints with markers. The development of these marking pens was a boon to many artists: easier to work with than conventional technical pens, they can provide the kind of flexibility pens cannot, sacrificing only a degree of control in exchange. Star Hawks was inked with markers, and certainly the early installments compare favourably with any of his earlier solo efforts.

The problem with Kane's own inking is that the artist, lacking both the facility granted to some and, for long stretches, necessary practice, had to devote considerable effort to putting an acceptable finish on the pencils. Whenever Kane has to hurry through a project he's inking, the results are immediately bad. The eight issues of **Green Lantern** by Kane alone are unfortunate examples of this. Apart from whatever problems originated in the pencils (and there appear to be many), the inking itself is thin, harsh and jarring. There is less fussy feathering than there was in the Kane/Greene art, true, but somehow the objects depicted seem to have no solidity, no existence in three dimensions--surely detrimental to an adventure strip. The weight of the ink line does not vary. This merely induced monotony with Giella; here, it actually makes the art difficult to read. Foreground objects are finished with the same line thickness as those in the background, with the result that, aside from relative sizes, no one object stands out from the others. As a comics panel contains elements that are more and less important, this lack of distinction is undesirable.

The switch to marking pens did not entirely alleviate these problems. While the initial Star Hawks episodes show Kane at his most conscientious, later installments would suffer from the same hasty rendering as did the **Green Lanterns**. This time the difficulty was compounded by the size of the reproduced work. The sameness of line weight and the use of linework to indicate shading make some of the strips difficult to figure out at first glance (and sometimes at second, too). When what were intended to be wisps of gas are mistaken for strands of spaghetti clogging up a frame, something has obviously gone wrong. Such an "unfinished" look must have been especially disturbing to newspaper readers who, when they follow a continuity strip at all, are used to the slick polish of a Stan Drake or the punchy blacks of a Caniff. Some of the later Star Hawks strips contravene the foremost rule of mass market comics, clarity. A problem peculiar to markers is that their line can very easily become choppy and abrupt. This drawback can be avoided if one is conscientious in rendering a contour, but quickly asserts itself if the need to produce becomes pressing; a hastily rendered line will always look better



when done with a brush. Kane's most recent comic book work [especially some stories for **Savage Sword** and **Conan**] suffers badly from this choppiness, which, in extreme cases, acts as a constant brake on the flow of the story.

By now it's obvious that Kane's inking problems are recurrent. Trained as a penciller—only part of the cartoonist's job—Kane thinks and functions as a penciller, even when he's inking. Tight rendering, even "appropriate" rendering, does not by itself make for a satisfactory picture. His failure to develop a more complete approach to the finished work severely undermines the success of his art. The lack of an effective substitute for shading is a major contributing factor to this. Comics are a stylized representation of things, relatively unsophisticated in outlook and in the actual tools of expression [if only because the level of reproduction is usually too low to convey such finesse]. Fine linework and washes just don't exist as options for a lot of cartoonists. The closest comics have traditionally come to suggesting subtlety and depth has been through the variance of the ink line and the use of solid black areas. If comics operate in a "binary code" of black and white, as some artists have suggested, the use of solid blacks has been the best way to convey an illusion of three dimensions. This discovery was one of the more important gifts Sickles and Caniff made to their successors and offshoots. Kirby's use of abstract black to suggest spatial depth wasn't the least of his innovations. Toth, always interested in light and dark values, even proved that an artist could forego brushwork entirely and still achieve extremely effective shading. But Kane has never demonstrated any interest in the lighting of his scenes and has, consequently, never been able to break out of the binary code or convey anything resembling subtlety at the quieter points of the stories he dramatizes. It is for this reason that Kane panels typically seem to have no depth of field, even though Gil frequently works out complete perspectives.

There are, apart from purely technical considerations, a number of elements which have become habitual in Kane's work. These have often been cause for complaint among readers, and have as much to do with story elements as with the actual drawing. First and foremost is the question of characterization. Kane is not oblivious to this matter; indeed, he once criticised a Russ Heath story because every character in it had the same face. Again, Star Hawks—probably the closest Kane has come to drawing a "team" feature—contains Kane's best work in this area. The starts, Chevez and Jaxon, are two different types of characters, and are accordingly drawn as strongly differentiated persons, each registering clearly [if anything, the ostensible second banana, Chevez, registers more strongly than the supposed lead!]. Supporting characters are also clearly typed, making visual impressions to match their personalities. Witness the cigar-chomping conman, Chatterbox.

When Kane is successful at stamping his characters with diverse features, it's often due to a memory with a considerable talent for retaining the visages of Hollywood starts and bit players. Flipping through a Kane story, one will often spot supporting characters based on actors from the 1940s. As with most of the comics artists of his generation, Kane was affected by films in a way difficult to appreciate in these days of shrinking studio output. Identifying the characters in a script with the movie starts of his youth seems to help Kane understand what kind of character he is drawing, and yields a clear visualization of the personality. This method is most useful in designing supporting characters since, in comics, these are often dashed off in undistinguished fashion. Naturally enough, Kane has also based his heroes on film stars: when the Atom made his debut in 1961, it was admitted that Ray Palmer was in large part based on B picture idol Robert Taylor.

A problem arises when Kane doesn't pay as much at-

THEY SUSPECT THAT I KNOW... THEY'LL KEEP AFTER ME!
WE DIDN'T MISS HER BY MUCH.
BUT WE MISSED HER... AND THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME!
SHE MUST HAVE SENSED WE WERE CLOSING IN, LUKA.
SHE'S GONE FROM THAT HOVEL...
DON'T WORRY... I'LL PICK UP HER TRAIL AGAIN.
YES, I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOU, RAJEER. I KNOW YOU'LL FIND HER AND KILL HER!
KANE 10-6
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tention to detail as this approach requires. Without conscious deliberation, Kane tends to draw the same faces, or the same types of faces, over and over again, and nowhere is this more evident that with the lead characters. Over a period of a few years, Ray Palmer began to look less like Taylor and more like Hal Jordan, losing his widow's peak and acquiring a raffish curl that, like Jordan's, moved from one side of the head to the other between panels. A quick dye job, and either of them could sub for Johnny Thunder. Similarly, Rex Jaxon soon lost his resemblance to James Coburn and, with his lean face and wavy hair, joined the usual Kane clan of heroes. Kane's strips never attain the ludicrous in this regard, as did, say, George Wunder's **TERRY**, in which the men, women and pets all bore the same face. Instead, his characters are broken down into categories, each represented by a single prototype: one hero, one fat man, one Viking ... and, one is tempted to say, one woman. Kane seems to treat women as another character type, rather than an entire sex. Apart from the hag figure which recurs in his fantasy material, the only female form that appears in his work with any degree of frequency is the lithe young model. The Carol Ferris/Jean Loring lookalike has in recent years been replaced by the bronze-bra'ed, long-tressed wench with the wasp waist. Feminine faces and bodies are almost completely unvaried, so much so that when the freckled Tammany Coyne or ponytailed Rnity Kwark appeared in Star Hawks, the shock of seeing even a nominal attempt to characterize a woman was considerable. Of course, the male figures aren't that much better off: one sees the same supertense masculine body over and over in Kane's pages, though he will, on rare occasions, decide that this character should be shorter or heavier than that one.

Kane's weakness at imagining and depicting detail is further indicated by the costuming he uses. At one time, he expressed the opinion that he didn't like to break up his figure designs with belts or capes; it would be truer to say that he doesn't like to break up his figures with clothes, period. Invariably, Kane opts for the customary skin-tight jumpsuit, on view in all the superhero and science fiction features. The standby employed for futuristic costumes has most often been distinguished by straps criss-crossing over the chest, a la Adam Strange. This one is on view in many of his stories for **Strange Adventures** and **Mystery in Space**, and has also appeared on the Weaponers of Qward and the Star Hawks. The Star Hawks have also worn variations on the Green Lanterns' uniform [an "indented" tunic with a circle over the heart]. Blackmark, in the first chapter of "The Mind Demons", wears a dressy ensemble, but in most scenes prefers the loincloth wardrobe much favoured by the "barbarian" set. Only Savage and the western characters wear more or less believable clothing; for the rest, Kane seems to think that apparel conflicts with his anatomical exercises.

While there is, in the middle period work, in Savage, and in early Star Hawks, an accretion of detail that buttressed and makes credible the storyline, too often Kane falls back on standard tricks. It sometimes seems that the artist, rather than developing the drawing from the story at hand, simply imposes his concepts on the material, whether or not they are appropriate. The famous floating heads and flaring nostrils have been the cause of much derision, precisely because they have been used as a substitute for thought, thrown in at every excuse for a montage. Ironically, it is because Kane has been so successful at completely defining his unique approach to comics that his lesser work is so glaringly obvious. That said, there is really no excuse for thoughtlessness; one feels that the presence of these hackneyed devices, repetitious poses and generic faces, is due to an academic concern with figure notation and perspective.

To play the "count the influences" with Kane's art would be an involved task, since Kane has been able to learn from a large number of his peers and

OUR GUERILLA ACTIVITIES WILL THRIVE IN THESE SAFE AND COZY SURROUNDINGS, KIDDIES...
BEFORE I GOT INTO THE REBEL LINE, I USED THESE SAME PREMISES IN SOME OF MY DAINTILIER SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES!
SO THESE ARE THE TUNNELS YOU TOLD ME ABOUT, SHATTERBOK.
ALL THAT REMAINS OF A ONCE THRIVING MINING INDUSTRY, REX, M'BOY!
AND EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED TO SNATCH TORBIN FROM THE BRINK OF OBLIVION!
ZAKE
AND WITHIN THE PRISON FARM...
TORBIN'S STILL VERY POPULAR! IF YOU EXECUTE HIM IN PUBLIC...
...IT COULD TRIGGER A REVOLT!
I'M AWARE OF HOW PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT HIM, CAPTAIN NOVA!
WHICH IS WHY TORBIN MUST BE DESTROYED IN FULL VIEW OF THEM ALL...
...TO PROVE THAT NO ONE CAN OPPOSE ME!
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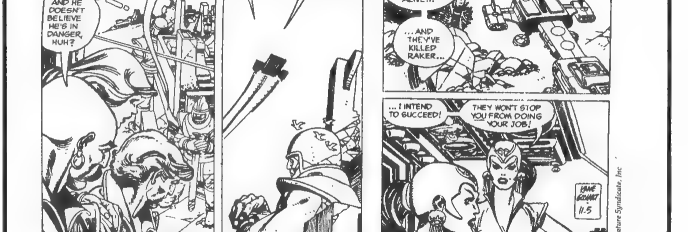
predecessors. Certainly artists as diverse as Toth and Ditko have had some degree of influence on him; Kirby, for whose work he has had the highest praise, is for Kane a figure of major importance. It is, however, the Bridgeman/Burne Hogarth influence that weighs most heavily with Kane. There isn't much doubt that Kane is a better comics artist than Hogarth, and a better storyteller with a fresher, more original approach. Like Hogarth, though, Kane has not been above emphasizing what he calls bravura drawing over story dynamics (it could be said that Kane pays a lot of attention to picture composition on projects that are special to him, and is content to get away with a bravura approach at other times). More to the point, there is in Kane's art a degree of over-dramatization that is also to be found in Hogarth, a manic quality that delivers an immediate impact, but which can become wearisome. This observation is truer of some examples than it is of others: whatever else they may be, **Blackmark** and **Savage** are linework, the sparse, undecorated architecture, and the jagged geometry of the landscapes. The work is more direct and has greater impact than does Hogarth's, and is more precise and more monolithic in its statement than Kirby's. Over a long period, Kane has thought and felt through his work, so that everything in the art supports his ideals. Extraneous elements were either suppressed or dropped entirely; nothing impedes the completeness of the emotional statement being made.

All this is in Kane's favour. Such thoroughness has a concomitant weakness, however: Kane now seems to have considerable difficulty adjusting the tone of his work. This is partly a matter of time and concentration, of course. Kane was able to switch gears from his bombastic Marvel material to the comparatively refined and much more controlled Star Hawks. In the main, though, the goals embraced by Kane have precluded much success at handling less heroic material. Kane has at times expressed something close to hostility when discussing


ACCORDING TO THE NEWSPAPERS, EMPEROR EUAN IS HUNTING IN THE RUINS OF BALABAR DOWN THERE.
AND HE DOESN'T BELIEVE HE'S IN DANGER, HUH?
BUT HE IS...! FOREGAW IT!
LET'S HOPE WE HAVE TIME TO CONVINCE HUA YOU'RE RIGHT, NAYDA.
NEARBY, AKA KANDELL, ARRIVES...
EVEN THOUGH NAYDA IS STILL ALIVE...
...AND THEY'VE KILLED BAKER...
...I INTEND TO SUCCEED!
THEY WON'T STOP YOU FROM DOING YOUR JOB!
JANE GOODALL 11-5
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carefully structured pieces, the artist keeping a tight rein on the tempo until the climactic scenes are reached. On the other hand, **Captain Action** and most of the Marvel material let loose from the first pages right through to the last. It's true that when Kane went to Marvel, he made an effort to beef up his figures a la Kirby, and otherwise conform to the prevailing house style; there's little doubt that this caused some loss of grace in the drawing.

Even in the best examples of Kane art, though, there is a powerful tendency towards this frantic harshness, and it is the by-product of the artist's excellence at depicting violence, at conveying a raw romanticism of savagery. Kane is one of a very few comic book artists who have realized a cohesive, comprehensive style. The expression of violence is what Kane finds satisfying in comics, and his art expresses it on every level. Not only the masterful manipulations and extreme distortions of human anatomy bear this out; so too do the harsh realism; in a broader sense, he has scant interest in naturalism. Ease of expression is alien to him. His work is too heroic, too charged with tension and power, to allow him to draw humans that are in anything less than the peak of physical perfection. They are, in fact, too tightly constructed to be composed of flesh. John Severin has no trouble drawing characters who are entirely convincing in their unglamourous humanity. Jack Kirby, whose art certainly could not be called realistic, still had such a tremendous range of easy, unforced expression, that he could depict even a rock-like creature like the Thing relaxing in an easy chair or taking a bath, and make him look utterly believable. Kanes people cannot do these things. They cannot kiss, or lift a spoon to their mouths, or flake out on a couch. They must always be running, leaping, diving, throwing tremendous punches. At this, they are adept and unchallenged. But at performing the thousand trivial, recognizable details of human experience, they are, for the most part, un-

Savage reached out gently, the hardness of his hand touching the trembling softness of her shoulder...
The girl I used to know would've been too frightened to say that much.
There was a sudden, jolting, pounding at the door...
Hugo! Miss Mace! Open up!
© 1982 Gil Kane

believable.

The artist's area of interest is his perogative, and there is no reason why Kane should strive for a more naturalistic feel when neither his interests nor his abilities are so suited. Frequently, his stark, austere drawings have been able to impart a kind of mythic uality to the material. A good example of this is the first installment of the Conan novel, "The Hour of the Dragon", in **Giant-Size Conan** no. 1. The revivification of the dead sorceror, Xaltotun, is depicted so directly, so powerfully, that another interpretation of the action seems inconceivable. This is less a cold adaptation [the **Classics Illustrated** trap] than a realization of the story. At moments like these, Kane's visuals seem to encapsulate and make manifest a number of basic, evocative emotions, combining the relative powerful unconscious emotions, combining the relative simplicity of a cartoon with the raw, unsophisticated tug of myth. It sometimes seems that Kane's real talent is not for epic, which is encyclopedic in nature, but for whatever comic book equivalent there is of Greek tragedy. Kane has difficulty putting on paper the subtler mix of elements required to sustain a more down-to-earth narrative. Indeed, what hurts his work the most is not that he sets his sights on the romantic, but that the romance his art embodies is so limited. A romance of violence is a one-note thing which provides us with the climax, but not the build-up. Kane has taken one element from the complex of romance and made it the basis of his work. In most cases this is insufficient to engage the reader and satisfy him on all counts. Nobility and idealized love, the foundations of medieval romance, are missing just as much as the details of quotidien life. Drop all this out, and we are left with a viewpoint that has more in common with **Argosy** or **Soldier of Fortune** than it does with Mallory.

This narrow quality, which begins to make itself felt after looking at Kane art over a period of time, is immediately noticeable in those stories which the artist has written or plotted himself. **Captain Action** certainly lives up to its title: the three issues written by Kane are indeed composed of wall-to-wall action. They're the kind of stories in which hero and villain exchange verbose arguments over right and wrong while pummelling each other into the ground. There is an idealism, and a sort of social consciousness, here, but it is the standard comic book idealism of the period [the "if we do that we're no better than they are" line], even less convincing than usual. No doubt this is due to the characters involved, none of whom has any personality to speak of. The conflicts between Action and his father-in-law, Dr. Evil, are based on a kind of abstract absolute: one hates humanity on principle [the end result, perhaps, of too much education], and the other defends it ... on principle.

Needless to say, the philosophies espoused during their violent argument are a jejune embarassment. Cap is so noble that one starts to root for his opponent, and in fact the series puts one in mind of what a Reed Richards book would be like. Kane tries to inject some emotional involvement, by having Cap come up against the "frozen life-essence" of his dead wife [?], and in the final issue resorts to the dependable must-innocents-suffer ploy [in which a child is threatened by the villain's actions], but somehow, it doesn't come off.

Capt. Action was, still and all, a regular comic book; **Blackmark** and **Savage** represent Kane's attempts to break out of the comic book ghetto and into new markets. While the plots of each are more carefully structured than is usual for comic books, they're not much different otherwise. **Blackmark** is devoid of human interest, a mass of pulp cliches served up as an advance upon traditional comics. In point of fact, any corny John Broome script has more going for it in the way of wit and inventiveness, even characterization, no matter how "formulated" or childish. **Blackmark** itself is formula, and elements of diverse formulae jumbled together with no great inspiration. Both of the published episodes have pretensions to characterization and emotional concerns. In the original, these are provided largely by Blackmark's need to free himself from both slavery and from the implanted visions of King Amarix. A lot of time is spent in setting up this situation; however, the scale of values that's at work is revealed when we see that fully half the book is spent on the climactic fight in the arena. The second book stacks the deck by having the hero confront the warlord who murdered his parents and his wife; the emotional motivation is the usual pulp

PRECISELY AT MIDNIGHT, TALBOT RETURNS TO HIS HOTEL ROOM
THE DINNER'S BEEN OVER QUITE SOME TIME, TALBOT. SO NO ONE NOTICED YOU GOING OR COMING. REMEMBER NOW, YOU WERE AT THE DINNER ALL EVENING!
REMEMBER!
© 1982 DC Comics

standby, revenge, here unenlivened by any spark of genuine feeling. It seems that it is the action that is important: if some excuse is necessary for the violence, then one is provided. **Savage** is infamous for its generous doses of graphic violence, a thoughtful piece of work whose protagonist smashes, shoots and bludgeons his way through the story. When his woman is shot, he mutters "Those murdering swine ...". Savage himself seems cast more in the mold of Mike Hammer than of James Bond. Whatever the source there is less sexual content than is usual for this genre [wherein gunplay customarily substitutes for foreplay], and what there is, is linked quite directly with the brutality. The intention may have been to break out of the ghetto, but **Savage** has a ludicrous comic book plot which has L.B.J. being replaced by a look-alike android controlled by a half-man, half-machine forerunner of Deathlok.

Both Blackmark and Savage are characters constructed strictly according to the rules of what such figures are supposed to do and feel. The supporting characters are selected from a gallery of stereotypes, and are there to motivate or feed the hero's rage. A diversion would be appreciated ... but that would have interfered with the action. Both projects are distinguished by interesting visual formats and relentlessly banal stories.

It is, of course, unreasonable to expect an artist who writes or plots infrequently to quickly master subtleties of plotting or characterization. What's interesting about these projects is that they embody, in story form, many of the same values upon which Kane's art is based.

The violence of Kane's drawings, so powerful and liberating, becomes less attractive when translated into a literary equivalent. The heroic purity, the austerity, of the art, uncompromised as it is by naturalistic detail, becomes a kind of sterility: characters and storylines are unencumbered by any spirit or nuance that might push them past the level of stereotype and formula. Kane's work cannot convey the sense of freedom, of the largeness of life, that even Kirby's cartoons can. This has an intriguing consequence for the art. Men such as Caniff and Eisner have, whether consciously or not, adjusted their work over the years, with the line becoming looser and some amount of detail in the rendering being lost. Pin-point precision—still the grail of today's younger artists—is replaced by a more expressive contour. This does not seem to be an option for Kane. He has, in fact, expressed distaste for generalizing the specifics of the drawing. When Kane slackens his control, his figures become incomplete, not looser. He refuses to "cheat" with regard to settings, and conscientiously works out perspectives; when the artist is in a hurry, we see not short-cut silhouettes, but backgrounds that abruptly vanish at some point. "Control" and "structure" are words Kane himself uses repeatedly to describe his art, and, while the results are often admirable, one occasionally feels that, with all that discipline, valuable qualities are being censored. In any case, it seems strange that an artist who once dismissed the "illustrative" comics artists as people who never sold a dime's worth of comics should be emulating Lou Fine.

It is no great exaggeration to say that Kane art is something of an acquired taste: it makes demands on the reader, and requires some shifting of mental gears to appreciate. To criticise it solely on the basis of wooden noses and exaggerated anatomy is to miss the point. In Kane's best work, the distortion exists for a reason, to better express the action and to stress the violence. Over a long career, Kane has thoughtfully developed a brisk, at times frantic, style. If there are masters of anatomy and movement in comics, he is surely one of them; and he is a generally excellent storyteller. Underlying all this is an uncanny ability to unfailingly draw an exciting picture. A Kane drawing makes you catch your breath. The world he depicts can be utterly convincing, ad it has an imagination and a narrative power grabs hold and pulls hard. Where Kane is open to attack is the limited emotional range with which he deals successfully: his romance of violence necessarily concerns itself with only a few of life's matters. What this indicates, perhaps, is that even superior talents can be inhibited by the boy's-adventure nature of comic books.

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FANDOMZONE

Artist and writers are switching back and forth between MARVEL COMICS and DC COMICS at such a rate, that readers may find it difficult to remember, who is doing what. And what of the writer and artist, do they sometimes have this same problem?

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
LEX LUTHOR IS BACK IN TOWN AND UP TO NO GOOD!
THIS LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR ...
...
WHERE THE ACTION IS!
R.LEWIS

FF was still on top, Bat Lash was riding tall. No one knew the name of Mockingbird or the name of baby Richards ... Comic prices went up to 15 cents. And Dr. Wertham struck again ...

1969

Continues

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Do you Remember?

by Don & Maggie Thompson

Comics drew increasing attention from the world at large. Christopher Ng wrote us about an item we reported in our newsletter for November 1969):

> Comics, posters, and mail order catalogues may soon be study materials for some degree candidates at Bowling Green State University [in Ohio]—focused around the university's Center for the Study of Popular Culture, opened in the school library recently after two years of planning. Its director says it's the only one of its kind in the country. The Center, according to the report, emphasizes phases of American life that aren't primarily intellectual or creative. Oh, so?

In fact, 1969 saw major steps taken in legitimization of comic art in the mind of the general public. Not only was the Bowling Green Center begun [with its backhand swipe at people who think comics could be primarily creative] but the SFACA was formed.

Bill Blackbeard set up the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, a nonprofit taxfree institution, that year. Bill made his collection [2,000 volumes and 8,500 periodicals on comic art—plus 40,000 Sunday pages and 100,000 daily strips] available to researchers. At that point, the Academy was located on Golden Gate Avenue in San Francisco; since then it has grown enormously and moved. If you want to study comic strips [and some old comic books, as well, though the curator's fascination with super-hero comic books is limited, and the collection is not definitive in that regard], you should visit the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, 2850 Ulloa Street, San Francisco, California 94116. [Note: Bill is extremely busy, as you can imagine. ReseaRCH VISITS SHOULD BE ARRANGED IN ADVANCE.[Moreover, if you need a tax break and have a good collection you're tired of, donations are legitimate tax deductions and will be appraised by Blackbeard for such a purpose. His cataloguing of your donations may make them more accessible than they would be in your own home, if you need to consult an item for reference.

Last installment, we mentioned the mystery of the identity of "Mockingbird" in DC's **The Secret Six**. 1969 had another comics puzzle for some fans: What would be the name of Reed and Sue Richards' son?

Seldom has the odd time scheme of comics been so completely out of whack with the world that reads comics as when the Fantastic Four became the Fantastic Five. Fans who had been waiting for months were finally

told that Reed and Sue's son had been born. It was then that fandom began to have doubts about the sort of parents the kid had. Issue followed issue without any indication that genius Reed and his proud wife, Sue, had ever had the slightest thought that a name would have to be attached to the infant.

Imagine. You're told you'll have a child. It doesn't take you five months to realize that it will need a name. Maybe you're just one of the world's procrastinators—and the baby arrives—and its name on the certificate is Baby Richards. Then, finally, you decide on a name.

Maybe you come up with a silly name. Or an unusual one. Lots of people have strange names and have even done well with them. Vermont Connecticut Royster was editor of the **Wall Street Journal**. One of Maggie's ancestors was named Preserved Fish. (Don't you wish **you** had an ancestor named Preserved Fish?) But you give the kid a name. Silly or sensible, rare or common, a name is going to be stuck on the child. Right?

But you're not thinking like Reed and Sue Richards.

The child was born in a comic dated November 1968. In the September 1969 issue of **Fantastic Four**, Reed and Sue suddenly realized they hadn't named him yet. It can happen to anyone, we suppose. For ten months, they'd apparently been singing lullabies to someone they'd been calling "Boy" or "Kid" or "Babyface" or whatever came to mind. But the realization didn't make the duo spring into action. Far from it. The team that could decide at a moment's notice to attack world-eating monsters or develop a doorway into a nightmarish neck of space was far more hesitant when it came to preparing a label for their son.

Even after they acknowledged the problem, Old Stretchy and his Transparent Teammate didn't delve into **What to Name the Baby**. They only indicated they'd have to think it over someday...

When it came, "Franklin" seemed hardly worth the delay.

In 1969, the world science fiction convention was held in St. Louis; though nominally devoted to SF, the con had attractions for comics fans, as well. At the costume ball, for example, the grand prize went to Bruce Pelz, but the prize for the most humorous went to Rick Norwood, who went as Charlie Brown. When a costumed fan fell off the stage and ripped the hotel's movie screen, the hotel promptly demanded $250 to repair it, and Harlan Ellison immediately began a fast hat-pass. Within ten minutes, more than $400 was raised (including a donation from some hotel employees, who were amazed at the loyalty and friendliness of fans). Said Harlan, "Here's $250. Lay it on these mothers."

Jim Warren had been in St. Louis the first day of the con and then disappeared (flying to the West Coast on business). When things were winding up on the last day, he suddenly breezed through the lobby, gathering fans in his wake. He assembled many of the comics buffs who remained (by this time, most had left to go home) and threw a delightful comics-related film party. The work of comics-fan-turned-filmmaker Bob Greenberg was shown—and a Felix the Cat cartoon. Then we were shown what was apparently the first pornographic animated cartoon made; it had, reportedly, been done by the same animators who had made the Felix cartoon. Jim was apparently under the impression that the film was artistic and sophisticatedly adult (an impression Greenberg kept trying to dispel)—but Warren realized his mistake as "Buried Treasure" began. The silent, black-and-white short was completely raunchy and often quite funny, in a primitive way. (It's definitely of interest to animation buffs.)

Speaking of "questionable" comic art brings critic Fredric Wertham to mind. There was some concern in fandom when it became apparent that he had been picking up fanzines and gathering information on fandom (eventually, though we didn't know it then, to be used in a book on fandom). Rob Gluckson wrote that Wertham had asked him for a copy of the black-and-white **His Name Is Savage**. Rob supplied it, only to find a panel from it reproduced in the July 1969 issue of **The American Journal of Psychotherapy**, accompanying a Wertham article. The article's comments on one of Gil Kane's bloodier panels was that it was from "one of the currently mass-produced publications given me by a child and now in the hands of children far and wide." Rob remarked to us, "That 'given by a child' part, I'm sure, has a great deal of emotional value when read by a parent especially. In this case the child was **me**." Rob never did tell us how old he'd been at the time.

1969 marked a turning point in pricing policies: the return of the price increases which had seemed to be ended at the 12-cent level. By year's end, both Marvel and DC comics had 15-pricetags. Jerry Scalley sent us an article from **Marketing** in which comics as an advertising medium were discussed. A one-time, full-page ad in 4,500,000 copies of Gold Key's titles cost only $4,500; Revell, Inc., for instance, laid out about $45,000 yearly for comic-book ads. The May 1969 issue of **Marketing** was filled with happy remarks about how great it was that comics' prices were increasing. DC, for example, said, "retailers can anticipate earning more then $3.5 million annually on sales of DC comics...**almost $1 million more than was earned at the 12-cover price**."

Even so, we didn't think prices would hit 60-in a dozen or more years.

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Next: "1970, the End of a Decade"

(Hey, people, you haven't been writing to us with additions, corrections and comments about our coverage of comics fandom's history! As we get increasingly anecdotal, we expect you to come up with your view of fandom of the era under discussion. What were you doing in fandom in 1969? It was only thirteen years ago, after all. Send comments, questions, arguments, additions and corrections to: Don and Maggie Thompson, 8786 Hendricks Road, Mentor, Ohio 44060.)

ALLEY AWARDS 1969

Last time around, we didn't report the results of the Alley[annual comics fan] Awards for 1969. **FF Newsroom** #7 [done by Fantagraphics] printed the results in May 1971. Mark Hanerfeld tallied; there were at least 319 voters.

I. Best Comic Magazine Section
1. Best Adventure Title: **Fantastic Four**
2. Best Fantasy/SF/Supernatural Title: **Dr. Strange**
3. Best Western Title: **Bat Lash**[80% of the vote]
4. Best War Title: **Star Spangled War Stories**
5. Best Romance Title: **Young Love**
6. Best Humor Title: **Archie**

II. Best Professional Work
1. Best Editor: Dick Giordano [160 votes]
2. Best Writer: Roy Thomas [149 votes]
3. Best Pencil Artist: Neal Adams [199 votes]
4. Best Inking Artist: Tom Palmer
5. Best Cover: **Captain America #113** [Jim Steranko]
6. Best Full-Length Story: "...And Who Shall Mourn for Him?) [**Silver Surfer #5**; Stan Lee, John and Sal Buscema]
7. Best Feature Story: "At the Stroke of Midnight" [**Tower of Shadows #1**; Jim Steranko]
8. Hall of Fame Award: Deadman by Neal Adams

III. Popularity Poll
1. Best Adventure Hero Strip: Spider-Man
2. Best Adventure Group Strip: Fantastic Four
3. Best Villain: Dr. Doom
4. Best Supporting Character: Rick Jones
5. Strip Most Needing Improvement: Superman

IV. Newspaper Strip Section
1. Best Adventure or Human Interest Strip: **Prince Valiant**
2. Best Humor Strip or Panel: **Peanuts**
3. Hall of Fame Award: **Tarzan** by Burne Hogarth

V. Fan Activity Section
1. Best Limited Reproduction Fanzine: **Newfangles**
2. Best Unlimited Reproduction Fanzine: **The Comic Reader**
3. Best Fan Artist: John Fantucchio [70 votes]
4. Best Fan Writer: Mark Hanerfeld
5. Best Fan Project: 1969 New York ComiCon

COMIC GOURMET

Robert Anderson

A couple of issues back **Comics Feature** announced the upcoming release of two books devoted to preserving the works of Carl Barks--**The Life and Times of Uncle Scrooge**, which would preserve his best stories, and **The Fine Art of Donald Duck**, which would gather his oil paintings (and here, I didn't even know that Donald could draw). Well, they are out, I have them, and they certainly live up to their promise.

The Scrooge book gathers eleven of Barks' best stories about dear old Uncle, adds a brand new tale, and packages the entire assemblage in a format which I am sure is totally unfamiliar to our cast of characters. The book is contained within a leather-like cover (on my copy a rich brown) seemingly embossed with real gold and bearing a set in plate. The plate suitably portrays Scrooge in one of those positions we have come to associate with rich tycoons--one foot resting among coins, the other set upon bars of gold, with a globe of his world suitably perched on his vault behind him. To his left lie piles of jewels, in the background the wallpaper is emblazoned with gold dollar signs, while stage center our hero is

wearing a robe of red velvet, pince-nez perched squarely upon his beak as he holds his walking stick upright in his right hand and with his left, also gloved in white, he clutches a stack of one-thousand dollar bills. This image fits both the character and the book, as we shall see.

The book is printed on the finest quality, heavy-gloss, white paper and is physically large both in size as well as in pages, numbering them at almost four hundred. Opening with an appreciation by one George Lucas, of **Star Wars** fame, we continue through an introduction by Barks himself and a long biographical essay by Michael Barrier. No, not long, in fact only thirteen well-written pages. It's just that after lifting the massive cover and reading this far I find myself impatient to begin the stories. After all, that is the reason for the book, isn't it?

Once reached the stories are indeed worth the wait. The choice is excellent. Gathered here are the best tales spun by a master storyteller. And whether it is a story such as "Back to the Klondike", which reveals a facet of Uncle Scrooge not often seen , or "Trouble From Long Ago", also known as the famous horse-radish tale, or the "Land Beneath the Ground", in which we meet the absolutely unbelievable Terries and Fermies--these **are** remarkable stories. These are stories not soon forgotten but cherished and remembered for a long, long time. And that is why the book exists at all, because a large number of readers realized that there was something special about these stories which they first read on cheap newsprint buried between other far less memorable tales. And they wanted to regain that magic, here reproduced on far superior paper, excellently recolored, but still essentially the same stories, nevertheless. The last story in the book, "Go Slowly, Sands of Time" is a collection of beautiful oils and somewhat fetching text but it is not a comic book story. As Will Eisner would say, it is not a "sequential narrative" but merely a well-illustrated story. And that is not what we go to Carl Barks for. The book would have been better served if Barks had prepared his new story in his grand tradition, or even if we merely [merely?] received a twelvtch serving of his masterpieces of yesteryear. One disturbing point of the book, and a point I will return to later, is the sheer overbearing nature of the production itself. It is sufficient to simply note here that it is impossible to hold the book and read it--it can only comfortably be read while resting on some surface which will hold its weight.

The **Fine Art of Walt Disney's Donald Duck** is an even more splendid production. Weighing in at over sixteen pounds it is perhaps the only book that could appear next to co-publisher Russ Cochran's EC volumes and make the latter appear to be a cheap, slap-dash effort. Upon approaching the book we are first confronted by its slipcase. This in itself is impressive as it is **very** well constructed, inset on one side by a figure of Uncle Scrooge with moneybag and walking stick all in gold leaf, while the other side sports a large family portrait of Donald, Daisy, Scrooge and all of the rest of the ducks, surrounded in a gold frame. Oddly enough, and at variance with most other slipcases, the publisher has neglected to imprint the spine with the title of the work. While this may otherwise seem a trivial objection, in a project otherwise this lavish, it does seem a peculiar oversight.

The book itself epitomizes the peak of the bookmaker's craft. The book, like the slipcase, is of royal blue and bears the same golden figure of Scrooge on its reverse. On its front, also in gold, we first discover the title of the work as well as a gold-framed inset plate. The plate illustrates a view of the interior of Uncle Scrooge's moneybin, filled with every sort of wealth imaginable, among which we find a reclining Donald and his nephews staring at a coin held up for exhibit by Uncle Scrooge. Entering the book we find fine parchment pages and on the title page we are assured that this book is number 1557 of a limited edition of 1875. Carl Barks has signed the book personally and individually to further reassure us. Here I pause to wonder whether number 712 or 1870 really read and appear that different from this volume. Do their owners wonder similarly about 1557? Moving on we find an excellent introduction penned by E Barbara Boatner, a discussion by Bruce Hamilton, and most importantly, a previously unpublished story, "Silent Night". Then the fun begins and we are definitely out of the parchment pages and into very heavy, museum grade, glossy, white paper. For the next two hundred and fifty pages we will feast our eyes on the collected oil paintings of Carl Barks. Many of them are nearly original size and all of them are incredibly, breathtakingly beautiful! Several of the paintings also appear as foldouts and are therefore even larger than the already large size of the book. Some of the paintings are duplicates of each other and I cannot help but wonder why these are given full pages while other paintings such as "Duck in the Iron Pants"[plate #126] and "Unsafe Vehicle"[plate #133] are not. But since one hundred and eight of a possible one hundred and thirty five are given at least a full page and since the remaining twenty seven do appear, albeit eight to a page, we cannot protest too bitterly. Of most importance, the book is beautiful, and it is easy too spend vast amounts of time staring at individual plates mentally spinning tales about them.

While I heartily recommend both books to anyone who can afford them I do so with some minor reservation. I worry that we are becoming too concerned with form to the point of forgetting content, which is, after all, the real purpose behind it all. I worry that there is no book in which the Scrooge stories are gathered intact [the Abbeyvilles do **not** qualify] which I can hold and clutch to me as I read or which a young reader could safely handle at all. Somehow a duck book which would be literally dangerous for a young child to handle doesn't seem quite right.

Most of all, and what brought the above matter to my attention quite forceably, I worry what these books do to people. You see, I love and admire my parents a great deal, they are intelligent and caring people of usually sensible values. They bought and read comics while other parents banned them. Yet they both had very peculiar reactions to these books. My father says he vastly enjoys looking at the book of paintings but does not care to read the stories--and am I really that mistaken or are the stories the real heart of the matter? My mother's reaction was even more disturbing. She was standing, holding the **Fine Art** book and enjoying the paintings when my brother, bless his mercenary heart, announced the price of the book. At that point she slammed the book shut and virtually threw it at me for fear that she would damage it. And I have seen that lady sucessfully undertake some very delicate tasks

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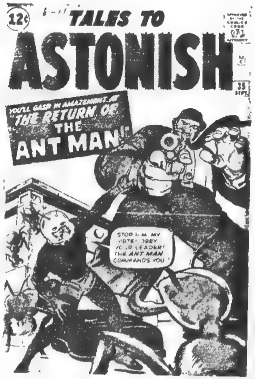
20 Years Ago this Month



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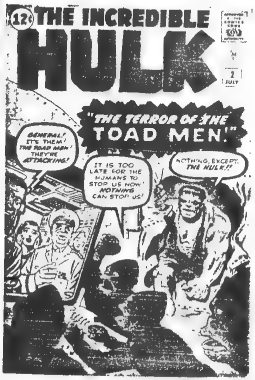
AIR!! I GOTTA HAVE AIR!
MY FLAME IS DYING WITHOUT OXYGEN! HELP!
I HURT SAVE HIM FIRST! BUT YOUR SPORTS!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THE INCREDIBLE
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"THE TERROR OF THE
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GENERAL! IT'S THEM! THE TOAD MEN! THEY'RE ATTACKING!
IT IS TOO LATE FOR THE HUMANS TO STOP US NOW! NOTHING CAN STOP US!
NOTHING EXCEPT THE HULK!!!

A VISIT WITH SOL HARRISON

Present At The Creation

by Rich Morrissey

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When Sol Harrison retired as President of DC Comics early this year, it was the end of almost fifty years he had worked in the comic book field. Indeed, as he told Carl Gafford in an interview in *THE AMAZING WORLD OF DC COMICS #10* (1976)—itself one of many DC publications Harrison originated over the years—he had performed production work on the first comic book ever published. *FAMOUS FUNNIES #1* in 1932. His association with its publisher, M.C. Gaines, and with engraver Emil Strauss led to his ultimately taking a job with Gaines' All-American line in 1942. He began as a director and was soon promoted to production manager; a position he retained when All-American merged with the affiliated DC line in 1944. When Carmine Infantino left his executive position in 1976, Harrison was made President of DC Comics, sharing the management of the company with Publisher (and now President) Jenette Kahn.

Today Sol Harrison divides his time between a winter home in Florida and a summer apartment in a New Jersey retirement community (which is also the home of another long-time DC staffer, Gardner Fox). Last June Ken Gale, Al Turniansky, and I visited Mr. Harrison at his New Jersey home.

In his early days with Emil Strauss, Mr. Harrison told us, "the publishers used to send down a complete book of artwork...the original art, to the engraver. The engraver colored it, and made a complete package of separations, and sent it to the printer. The publisher was not involved with any of the color...the coloring, at the beginning, was not considered important. It was only the artwork that seemed to be important."

As an engraver, Harrison worked on comics for a number of publishers, and for independent packagers like Harry Chesler, who provided stories for publishers like Fox and (at first) Quality that didn't hire writers and artists directly. Most of the super-heroes had red, yellow or blue costumes because "wherever you had to put a double color, or a triple color, it would cost you more money to put that in. It would take longer. So that's why you see a lot of simple colors. But the simplicity of the color was actually very important, because the printing process was such that it looked better with a bold and simple look. As soon as you add a couple of colors, one on top of the other, you muddy the colors, and at first that was a problem. If you remember, the first comics had black and white pages, and two-color pages—black and red, and black and blue. There were sections that were two colors only, and sections that were one color only." (The "*Famous First Edition*" *ACTION COMICS #1* (June 1938, reissued as *FAMOUS FIRST EDITION #C-26*, 1974) features twelve black-and-white pages. *DETECTIVE COMICS #27* (May 1939; reissued as *FFE #C-28*, 1974) includes twelve pages with only a single color, but by the time of *SUPERMAN #1* (later in 1939, and reissued as *FFE #C-61*, 1978) the entire book was being printed in non-standard four color.)

It was his work as an engraver that led to Harrison's being hired by DC's affiliate, All-American Comics. "I got a group together to be the art department at the engraver's. And Sheldon Mayer asked me to work for All-American Comics, 'Cause he needed an art director at the time and wanted me to work together with him. We were only two blocks away from each other, from where they had their offices, and he used to come over many times. In fact, we used to play cards together during lunch hours, and we became friends that way. And when he wanted an art director, he was looking for someone who understood the engraving process, and what had to be done afterwards. I was hired for that position.

"Then, maybe six months after that, needed an eight-page story of some title here, The Hourman, and take a four-page filler—we had two pages left, we had ads, and I would put it together by just going to the drawers and taking out stories of varied length.

"And only later, many years later, would we make up the whole package and say, 'Well, the main story now should be sixteen pages, or twelve pages...' or whatever we needed. That changed afterwards, but it wasn't how it was done in the early days of comics." Sometimes there were different editors on different features in the same book, and a book rarley revolved as much around a single feature as it usually does now.

"In fact," Harrison told us, "during the war, when comics were selling title like *COMIC CALVALCADE*, but had soon metamorphosed into a team book: "When we started to do *"The Justice Society,"* we had to have features just specifically, so we decided, 'If we have something, we want to continue it...we've got to have a completely tied-in book.' The change was when you had a story with a whole group of people, and we had to have an introduction, and an ending, and then there were individual stories. Gardner Fox [the writer of the book] used to be in all the time. And that's how it really worked."

In the summer of 1944 All-American Comics merged with the affiliated Detective Comics line, when DC owners Harry Donenfeld and Jack Liebowitz bought out AA owner Max C. Gaines. "Sheldon and I were called one Friday, I

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The separations room circa 1940, at Strauss Engraving. Sol Harrison is on the left [standing by the cabinet]. Also, Jack Adler is in the middle seat in the front row.

the man who was production manager had a fight with Max Gaines, the publisher—Bill Gaines' father. [Gaines] asked me to come into his office, and said, 'Sol, from now on you're the art director and the production manager. I don't want to hire another person, you can do the job.' And that's how I became a production manager. I was working with the ads, and positioning things in the book, and getting all the material together, and sending it to the engraver. I was taking all the stories that were being done, in the editorial department that Sheldon was working with...telling the editors we needed a seven-pager or an eight-pager. In those days, we had stories already completed of different varied lengths. And when you had to turn in a book, all you did was walk over to the drawers, and take out—I 100%, we decided that we wanted to come out with a special edition, and that was to be called *COMIC CAVALCADE*. And it was the first time we had anything that thick [96 pages] in our magazines. And all we did was take a *"Wonder Woman"* story, which we already had, and we just put the book together—it wasn't done editorially, it was done production-wise. All I did was go over to the drawers, and take out the stories—of course, I showed them to Sheldon, and then we decided what we would do for a cover."

Al Turniansky asked if a story ever had to be trimmed or continued to fit a space. "No, we didn't do that. We didn't cut them apart, because we always had enough. We bought stories, and just had piles of Wonder Woman stories." *ALL-STAR COMICS* had started as a variety

think it was, to go to 480 Lexington. And we didn't know what it was all about, but we knew it was in the DC offices, and we were brought in to Jack Liebowitz' office, and there, in their shirtsleeves, were Jack Liebowitz, Harry Donenfeld, Max Gaines, and their attorneys. Sheldon and I were traded to DC, and I became the head of production there. I ran the production department until I became Vice-President, and then Vice-President of All Manufacturing, and then became President in 1976.

"When we started working at 480, we changed to the system where we were holding material in the production department. Each editor had his material, and he would put the package together." Major changes were now primarily in the editor's jurisdiction, as

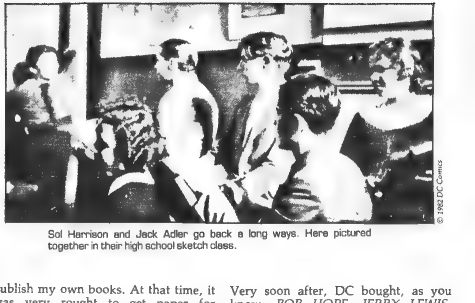
when most of the features from *MORE FUN COMICS*, including "*Aquaman*," "*Green Arrow*," and "*Superboy*," were moved into *ADVENTURE COMICS* in 1945. "I don't remember if there was anything special in doing that. It may have been that the sales were looking down and we were trying to build something up, and again, it has to do with the way we had editorial material at the time. In those time, that became the editor's judgement."

But the entire market was changing in the late 1940s, and many other long-running super-hero titles were making changes—some converting entirely to funny animals, as with *COMIC CAVALCADE* and *LEADING COMICS*, or to westerns, as with *ALL-STAR* and *ALL-AMERICAN*. Harrison observed, "Comic magazines as a business by itself was very lucrative in the early part of its run. But that goes back a long way. When TV came in, it became a problem. TV knocked it off completely. Then all comics just went down.

"Then we decided that we were going to do magazines tied in with TV. How could we get into this act? I'll tell you something that has not been written before. Naturally, I was always looking at what we were doing with comics—what type of stories and type of characters, and if anyone had an idea for a new book or title. I felt that the names on TV—that live people's names on a comic magazine would sell comics. This was an idea that I had myself. Everybody wants to be a publisher..."

Harrison made contact with a number of entertainment figures at this time. He, together with Joe Kubert and several others, flew out to California for the wedding of writer-artist Norman Maurer to Joan Howard. Joan's father, Moe Howard, was one of the Three Stooges comedy team, and Harrison took the opportunity to talk to the Stooges, the Marx Brother and many other Hollywood figures, about featuring them in comic books. He reached agreements with many of them, and made plans to strike out on his own as a publisher: "I had *FRANK SINATRA COMICS*, I had *EDDIE CANTOR COMICS*, *CHARLIE CHAPLIN COMICS*, and the rights to all the RKO Western heroes. I had a lot of the funny animal stuff, and the funny books were doing well."

After he was convinced that the venture would be successful—"Almost anything that I had would have sold, during that period of time," Harrison submitted his resignation to Jack Liebowitz. "I said that I was leaving the company, that I had an opportunity to publish my own books. At that time, it was very rought to get paper for printing, but I'd been promised, by someone that I had met who had paper in Canada—it was tied in with a newspaper in Canada—that they had a lot of extra paper, and I was promised to get that. After I left DC, and very few people knew that I did this, I went to Canada. And the man whom I had been talking to, who had the paper and was supposed to get us the contracts, had been put into jail!



Sol Harrison and Jack Adler go back a long ways. Here pictured together in their high school sketch class.

"He had stolen this paper, and had told different peole that he had it. And the upshot of the story is that instead of having the paper, I didn't have it. Now I had left DC—I had told Jack Liebowitz that I was leaving, and I was just too embarrassed to go back and say anything to him about it. But Jack had a brother who was working at DC, and he knew what I was doing, and I had told his brother what had happened, and that I was going to look for another job. I got a call that same day from Jack Liebowitz, and he said, 'I heard about your problem. Sit down and tell me what happened.'

"I then told him the whole story. In fact, I showed him the material, and showed him the contracts. I said these were the contracts I had signed, and I said, 'I don't have the paper, I can't produce it.'

"Jack said, 'Now, look, Sol, I'm not interested in that. I want you to be here, and forget what we talked about, that you were going. I want you to stay in charge of production.'

"I said, 'How about doing something with these comics? Get DC to work something out.' He said, 'Live people would never sell comics.' I took the material, I went back to work, I wrapped up the material. I put it away. Very soon after, DC bought, as you know, *BOB HOPE, JERRY LEWIS, JACKIE GLEASON* and everyone else, and only one time did Jack Liebowitz say to me, 'You were right.'"

I remarked that it was rather ironic that, despite its early success in the field, DC now does few, if any, comics about licensed characters even though Marvel appears to be doing quite well with them. "Well, that's a decision that is clearly editorial. Also, even if you can get a piece of the action when you do an adaptation, there is nothing else that you get from it. Yes, you can hit a lucky streak like *STAR WARS*, and who knew it'd be such a success at first? It could just as well have been a failure-they've produced other licensed properties that didn't do at all well.

"I've found, over the years, that whenever we tried to do something just the way it was on TV, that it never took off. Look at *WELCOME BACK, KOTTER*. I thought they had a beautiful package, beautifully drawn, and the script was terrific, artwork was great, and you had popular characters, and yet it didn't take off. Why?"

I suggested that perhaps it had been drawn too cartoonishly, especially as John Travolta, one of the show's stars, had been such a sex symbol. "Maybe parts of that—but he became more popular a little bit afterward. I would have thought that the book would be more popular than it was, but you really don't know. All you can do is put out the best package you can produce."

Ultimately, Harrison pointed out, "we don't really put out a product that we think is not going to sell." DC had run into difficulties with other licensed characters, such as its *LAUREL AND HARDY* title that turned out to be a one-shot (even the

advertised digest never appeared). "There were people fighting, who said they had the rights, so instead of getting involved with that, we walked away from it. We didn't want to be involved with a court suit." More often, a licensed title would simply prove unprofitable. "*TARZAN* stopped because it didn't sell. It wasn't doing anything special, it was a borderline type of book. We kept it going because it looked good as part of our series, and yet, no matter what we did—whether the timing was bad or whatever, it never did anything special. And we surely tried. We had Kubert artwork—even at the end he was doing the layouts—and we did some of the large size tabloid books..." but all to no avail.

"And just producing a magazine

today, it'd fail, if you don't think of it in terms of other income. If you can't do something with it where you can sell it through merchandise or sell it to a TV series, or think about it even in terms of a movie down the road, you can't make the type of money (with a property) that you did in the early days of comics. It's a different route, everything is very costly—from the beginning till now the product has constantly been shrinking so you have less material to read. The costs are high. You're fighting other media. In most of the cases, you find that TV and movies have taken away from the money [to be made in publishing], so you have to look for something else. Today you've got Home Box Office as well as series on TV. We were lucky in 1966...

"Well, we've always had merchandising. From the beginning of Superman, we've had one manufacturer who made costumes. We had a Superman costume a year after Superman came out, by 1939—and they have been with us till today. The same people. They're the manufacturer that's been with us the longest, the longest contract ever. And not only did we have that, but we had other things with Superman, and you've seen them. We hit the heyday of the radio show. Kellogg's used to have stories on the backs of their packages. We were tied into things similarly to what we're doing today, but on a lesser scale. People didn't believe so much in the merchandising, as "hype" for a youngster to buy a product, as they do today.

"Now we go into 1966. 1966 was the *"Batman"* craze, and that was a fluke. Who knew that that was going to turn out to be what it was? Who knew that every star in Hollywood wanted to play a part? Everyone! We were turning them away! Everyone wanted to be on the show, and every week people would watch the program just to see which of the Hollywood bigshots was in it. I think even Sinatra wanted to play a part—everyone, I was told, was involved. Then our licensing arm—in those days it was not Licensing Corporation of America; I think it was even before that—we gave out the rights. Jack Liebowitz had give the rights for someone to handle merchandising. And there was a bonanza in 1966: Ice cream pops, costumes, cars of all kinds—it went through the roof—compared to anything that was done with Superman or anything else earlier—I don't know what the figures are, but it went into the millions. And that sort of started the merchandising movement, and the way we thought about the product afterwards, because although we had made a great deal of money in merchandising, and the programs and everything else, the publisher, immediately following that, dropped dead. We'd created a second image for the character that was not in the magazines."

We mentioned the fact that, despite its tremendous success, the *BATMAN* TV show presented a campy image that wasn't always in keeping with the original character. "We gave them the rights," Harrison told us, "and let them do what they wanted, in good taste. That's always in a contract. And when it started, so much money was coming in that it was great for us, that it seemed to be what they wanted." DC's control over the use of its characters in other media, however, is "more today than it

was years ago. Although when *SUPERMAN* started (on television), we produced it ourselves." (The character's editors at the time, Whitney Ellsworth and Mort Weisinger, were largely responsible for the episodes.)

"Today, we're much more careful with anything we do. And yet, there has to be latitude—it's an entirely different process. Look at *SUPERMAN (THE MOVIE)*. We sat on that pretty much. We wouldn't let them do a dozen different things that they tried to do, and yet we let them change Lex Luthor—make him into a different type of character—and the visual effect of what Krypton, and the rocket, look like.

I asked if there were any objections to the sex scene in *SUPERMAN II* on the aforementioned "good taste" grounds—which some people even today have objected to. "I think it's done in good taste. But we were objecting all the while as to how other things were going to be done. They threw lots of things out...on things that comes to mind, but wasn't in the (final) script, was how to get Luthor's Lair. The original script had someone walking into the Plaza Hotel, who goes into the men's room, sits down in one of the cubicles, pulls the chain, and goes into Luthor's Lair. I said, 'Like Hell.' But in each case, where we had to make a change, we had rips it out of her hand. And we said, 'That's ridiculous! He would never do that, just take a bottle of champagne. He could make the bottle of champagne by himself by going to a grapevine and going through the whole business. It could be a funny scene, but that was against how he would react. His reaction to things was what we were interested in. Superman would not react that particular way. Therefore it was not in keeping with the world of Superman, with what had gone on before. That's where we had made most of our changes.

"And of course, you've heard about the fantastic results of *SUPERMAN II*. *SUPERMAN II* is three times better than

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George Reeves and Phyllis Coates (1951) and Christopher Reeve and Margot Kidder (1981) - Superman and Lois Lane then and now.

Yet in each case, in discussing this movie, Richard Donner spoke to us about the problems that were involved. He said, 'If we had made this movie in 1940, then the rocketship would look exactly like it did in the magazine. But you know that so much has gone past since then in the knowledge that youngsters have, it would be a laughingstock to utilize that.' He wanted to do the movie updated with the times. So we had to work a great deal to figure out what he could do to make it different, but it would still be the story. And that type of reasoning showed that they were concerned with what they were doing."

to give suggestions as to what it should be changed to, to give certain suggestions. My suggestion was, on that score: He goes into the Plaza Hotel, and he sits down in the telephone booth, dials L-U-T-H-O-R, and the telephone booth goes into Luthor's Lair. But then they decided that it would be interesting to use Grand Central Station, and do that whole bit. So that thing changed.

"There were lots of changes. (They) had one scene where the Queen of England was supposed to be breaking a bottle of champagne, to name a ship. Superman, going to get a bottle of champagne, sees this scene—and as it's going on, before it's able to break, he

SUPERMAN [I]—any part of *SUPERMAN*. This one has got it. I said that from the time we first saw parts of the script. We knew what was coming. And we were concerned with *ONE*—we wanted *ONE* to be built up, because *TWO* would be so much better. And they changed the end of *ONE*—that whole thing changed. *ONE* was not supposed to end the way it did end [with Superman reversing time]. That was the ending of *TWO*, originally. All of these things-there were so many different changes. They tried to add more action, because we felt that *ONE* would really be so much less important than *TWO*. Mort Weisinger was alive [then], and he

had read the script, and he agreed—that was his opinion, it was all of ours, that *TWO* had so many more things involved. So they tried to build up on *ONE*, and they did.

"*TWO* was already terrific. One of the first things I said—we all said—when reading the script of *ONE* was that Superman doesn't really have anyone super that he's fighting, because Luthor isn't the type of character that Luthor is in the magazine. I said, 'Luthor should have had not just a few people (working for him), he should have had an army of people. He should have had someone like a James Bond, an army of people there. That would have built up Luthor's part in *ONE*, and you would have seen Superman in a little bit more action, knocking out groups of people—more of that. He didn't have the antagonists. In *TWO*, he's got three people who are as super as he is, *plus* Lex Luthor."

The conversation turned to the humor in the movies. We all concurred with Harrison's statement that "If they had gone really camp, I think the thing would have fallen flat on its face." We mentioned the report that one of the drafts of the script had been very campy, and was sent back for revision. "Yeah, whenever we saw that it was the type of humor that you needed with Superman, it was fine, You had that in the TV series and all. But when it came to the final movie, we didn't want it.

He went on to relate an incident connected with one of the first movie's most successful gags. "I was there the day they photographed the scenes of Superman's first appearance—I went to say hello to the producer, to see what they were going to be shooting. And that was the evening that we had the blackout, New York City blacked out. Now, they had their own generators that could have lit up the immediate scene, but the buildings across the street had to have their lights on. So they made a decision about half an hour later, that they were not going to shoot anything the next day. I was there with one of our writers, and I said, 'I'm going to call my wife, and tell her where I am, that there's a blackout, and I'll be home as soon as we can make it.' And I go to the phone and put in a dime, and there's nothing. I said, 'I wonder if the telephone lines are down? That's funny.'

"And one of the movie men came over, and said, 'Mr. Harrison that's a prop.' And that was the prop—y'know the bit in *ONE* where Clark Kent runs over to the telephone booth? That was a gag that, no matter who you are, that's the one point that you bring out. And later, I told the story to Gerda [Gettel], and she sent it to the *READER'S DIGEST*, which printed it!" (It appeared in *"All in a Day's Work"* in the August 1978 issue.)

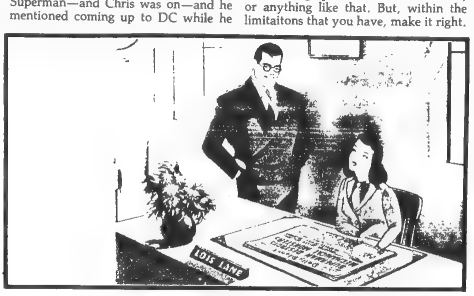
I noted that Superman doesn't even change in phone booths very often in the comics. "Yeah. And they did some very, very nice things with the way he changes—the multiple images in *TWO*. They were interested in the material. We sent them books. I constantly sent them packages. We sent them every particular book we could on Superman. We sent things back and photographed things and sent prints for them to get the feeling of the character.

"In fact, the day that Chris Reeve left for Europe to test for the part, he came to my office-he was told that I would have a copy of the script, and asked if he could read it. He came to me—no one was in my office; I was all alone on Friday night, and I was asked to wait for him. And we talked about Superman, and I pointed to the photographs—to the painting of Superman that I had on my wall, and I said, 'That's Superman.' The thing about it is that everyone who puts on the costume, for some reason, turns into the character. And we had that happen with the people who'd dress up for us as Superman, or Batman or Wonder Woman. They go on to some merchandising thing for one of the shows, and they treat the children differently. They could be anybody first, but there's something about the costume—they become the character, they react the way the character reacts. We had quite a talk about it.

"I don't know if you heard the radio program that they had on WPIX the night the movie premiered. They had a one-hour program, all about Superman—and Chris was on—and he mentioned coming up to DC while he was trying out for the part, and talking to Sol Harrison—that it was amazing what he thought of the character. And, of course, when he knew he had the part, I gave him a few of our covers, and the Superman belt buckle, and gave them to him, and said, 'Chris, this is for good luck!... I like [Burt] Reynolds and all that, and I'm sure he would have played Superman in an entirely different way, but how could you say anything about Chris Reeve? I mean, if you talk about a perfect Superman, he surely is. I only hope that it continues that way.

"I think the success of it shows in the part that he had. And today, we have that feeling with the Swamp Thing. That's all working with Mike Uslan, and I worked with Mike for years (when he was at DC), and knew about the Batman movie that he was trying to sell. I had seen the first scripts, and we discussed the character many times, and what the basis should be. The *BATMAN* movie is in the works now, and as soon as the directors and writers get through with their strike, that will be on the boards and everything. But we're involving people who are *interested* in doing the character the way we have done it here. Sure, there are changes, but they don't change the character so much that he's unrecognizable.

"Like I've told many manufacturers, if you're making a product, and it isn't going to look like Superman, then please do us a favor. Don't make the product. I'd rather you didn't, unless you decided that you're going to make it the best that you possibly could, with the limitations of the type of manufacture. If you're a plush doll manufacturer, you surely cannot make Superman like someone who is making a drawing, or something that's lithographed on canvas or wood, or anything like that. But, within the limitaitons that you have, make it right.



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There are things you can do, and there are things you cannot do. We're not going to ask you to do what you can't do, but the product has to be the best possible, with those limitations."

We talked briefly about some of the other people who'd worked with Sol at DC. "I had to add people, I needed a staff. And I took the staff from people that I knew. Jack [Adler] worked with me at the engraver, and I brought him to 480 Lexington soon after I started working there. Gerda [Gattel] worked for Marvel, she was a letterer and in production there, and then she came to us and asked for a job, and she became a secretary to (Harry) Donenfeld. Then she moved into my department."

Ken Gale raised the subject of the different formats DC experimented with over the years, such as the tabloids. "Well, that was my idea. I used to go to the printing press at World Color, whenever there was a problem, or they were doing something new, or just to see if there was something—we were looking for some new ideas, whether they were editorial, or package, or what. And I was talking to the pressmen, and to the printers there, and said, 'What can we do to make another kind of package?' I had in my hand a comic magazine, and I opened it up, and said, 'Even size. What if we just turned it around this way? It would be double the size. That impact, maybe, would be salable. He said sure, we could do that, and that's how the tabloid was born.

"We decided to do the repeats of the *"Famous First Editions"* in the larger size, so as not to rip off the collector who had the smaller book-we'd do it double the size. That was the reason for making it that size. And we felt it would be a boon for children, and that's why we went to *RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER*, and made it a larger-size book. We felt that children would open up this package, and just involve themselves—they would be in the book. And we started to speak to educators, who told us that the material would be good for children's eyes. Many of the educators were against comics—they'd say, 'They're too small, the kids can't read them,' and for those who talked that way, this was a boon. We thought we had something by the tail."

Al Turniansky asked about the Bible adaptation, which had originally been announced as covering the whole Bible, but ended up lasting only a single issue that covered only part of the book of Genesis. "When the Bible comics first came out, we felt that because of the type of artwork, that would be terrific. It was Carmine's decision not to go ahead. I think he was afraid of where the package was. When our first figures were in, it made money, but it wasn't a big moneymaker. But then we started to get additional sales from people all over the country who wanted the book. We sold almost every single copy that we ever had. And I wanted it to go ahead. I thought that that series deserved to be done.

"But y'know, we talked about it afterwards, and the tabloid books weren't doing anything special for us. In fact, we had a number of things on the board, like *KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE*, that never came out." (This was advertised in some DC books as a six-tabloid series featuring an adaptation of the Camelot legends by Gerry Conay and Nestor Redondo.) We observed that there were still a few tabloids being published by DC, such as tie-ins with the Superman movies and collaborations with Marvel like *BATMAN VS. THE INCREDIBLE HULK*. "Well, they feel that there they can get a price that is not competitive to a regular magazine. That type of magazine is really a collectors' thing, the type of book people will buy for the coffee tables. If you have it, you can't even stand it up in a normal bookcase. It has to be laid down, or be put on a coffee table. In book parlance, that's what they talk about as the fifty dollar Norman Rockwell book...big art books that people like to display."

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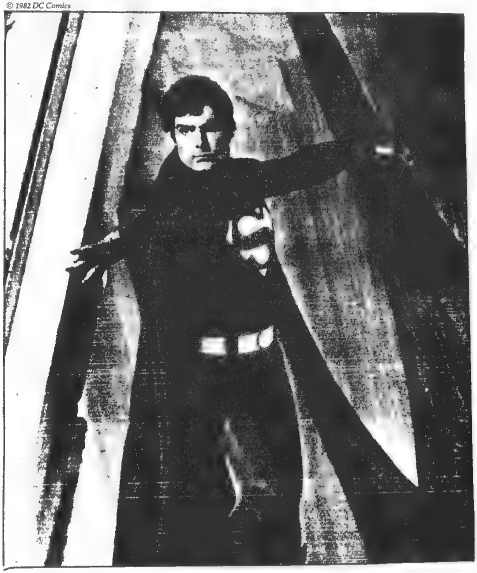

THE SUPER-TEAM SPIRIT

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SUPER-TEAMS OF THE 1960's
THE "OTHER COMPANIES" SUPER-TEAMS

PART II

by Murray R. Ward

The "Miracles" gang included Misfit, a super-strong, super-ugly caveman-type; Reflex, a somewhat screwy super-speedster; Thermo, who possessed super-heat powers; Manlet, a Doll Man surrogate who flew an HO scale "ramjet"; and Klank, billed as the "Brain and Brawn Robot". In this first tale, their headquarters was invaded by the harmless-looking, bespectacled Wizard as his self-appointed initiation test. After effortlessly getting by all of the super-heroes, Wizard was beaten up by the even more harmless-looking old professor! Nevertheless, his application was accepted, and he became a member of the team...whose first duty was to scrub the floor, under the direction of Klank.

In their second, and unfortunately final story, "Miracles, Inc." went into the "Rent-a-Hero" business, predating Luke Cage and Danny Rand's Hero-for-Hire operation by more than a decade. Misfit was nowhere to be seen in this second outing, but the Professor's daughter Una, introduced in the first story, proved to have a power of her own, the "Love Stare" which could render helpless any male who looked into her eyes. Besides the Wizard, two more new members made their debut: Super-Chef, known as the Crimefighting Gourmet, who carried a series of specially-powered sauces and spices in his rather cumbersome utility-belt, and the "Ace-in-the-Hole-Hero', advertised in the Rent-a-Hero brochure as "to be used in national emergencies only". Of course, a national emergency did arise and Prof. who raised his secret weapon, stored in a lead capsule in an underground silo, to the surface, where he stood revealed as a four-foot-tall, sleepy-looking kid in a straw hat, sweater, oversized coveralls, and size thirteen boots. This was Kaput, the "Prince of Jinx", whose mere presence caused super-villains to fall all over themselves, bedeviled by bad luck.

The Gong, a rejected applicant to the Miracles organization, took on the crazy crew in this story by forming his own villain-team, alternately known as the Gong Gang or the Institute of Infany, which included such members as Drowze, who could put anyone instantly to sleep (mostly himself); King Cactus, a possible cousin of Marvel's Porcupine; Chain-O-Rama, who resembled a walking safe with weighted chains for appendages; and Counter-Fit, who commanded an array of gimmick coins. With the help pfo Kaput, "Miracles, Inc." triumphed, but though the Gong promised to return "in no time", both he and the wacky super-heroes had run out of time, for #3 was the final issue of UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS.

II. THE SUPER-TEAM AS EXPERIMENT: THE FAB FOUR

Perhaps the most unlikely company to venture into publishing super-hero stories in the mid-60's was Dell, long famed for their licensed funny-animal and movie-adaptation titles. Their super-team entry appeared as the sole feature in the simply-named SUPER HEROES [unlike Mighty, Dell apparently never worried about DC or Marvel having dibs on the team]. This author's personal theory is that the comic was called SUPER HEROES because even Dell was embarassed by the name of the super-team contained therein: The Fab Four. [Shades of the Beatles!] Still, what better name could be expected from four teenagers who one day found themselves able to control the actions of four super-powered experimental androids?

Exploring the "Dell Hall of Heroes", a sort-of surrogate of DC's Superman Museum filled with statues of Kona, Toka, Nukla, and presumably other nondescript heroes whose names ended in the letter "A" [we readers never saw into the other rooms of the Hall, which was just as well since Dell didn't have enough heroes to fill more than one room], adolescent comic fans Danny Boyd, Polly Wheeler, Tom Dennis, and Reb Ogilvie discovered the quartet of inanimate "future heroes" - androids with built in powers but no guiding intelligence. An electrical explosion caused by the villain of the issue transferred the youngsters' minds into the androids, and they discovered they could switch back and forth at will. Handsome leader-figure Dan became El, equipped with laser-related powers; Polly found herself with the plastic powers of Polymer Poly, who was also the group's only flying member; bespectacled "brain" and part-time fanzine editor Tom took on the guise of Hy, master of hypersonic sound; and comic-relief Southerner Reb, to his dismay, inherited the freezing powers of the misnamed Crispy, the cryogenic android.

Stowing the androids in a nearby abandoned theatre [for some reason, nobody at the Hall of Heroes noticed their absence], the kids would switch identities whenever danger threatened. In the fourth issue, perhaps deciding that readers weren't identifying with the heroes, who after all were not the kids themselves [although the same deal worked out well for the original Captain Marvel - and as the astute reader will notice, most of the heroes under discussion bear some resemblance to the Big Red Cheese], the Dell powers-that-be had the androids permanently wrecked, and their powers transferred to the four teenagers. They then adopted new, not-as-striking costumes and set forth as the "new" Fab Four...but to no avail. The fourth issue of SUPER HEROES was the last, and yet another "alternative" super-hero company bit the dust, as Dell returned to what few humor titles they still retained after their 1962 split with Gold Key.

III. THE SUPER-TEAM ANTHOLOGIZED: MIRACLES, INC.

In the 60's, Hervey Comics' mainstay was the humor titles, and their star character was Casper the Friendly Ghost; today, it is the same, although Richie Rich has eclipsed Casper in popularity. Nevertheless, they too added to the super-hero ranks with a slew of new titles bearing the unlikeliest of names: DOUBLE-DARE ADVENTURES, THRILL-O-RAMA, and UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS, for instance. While DC and Marvel would do away with such abominable and unmemorable mastheads as soon as their super-heroes became firmly entrenched [as for instance, MY GREATEST ADVENTURE became DOOM PATROL, JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY became THOR, TALES TO ASTONISH became THE INCREDIBLE HULK, etc.], Harvey seemed to regard weirdly-named anthology titles as the ticket to super-doer stardom. Their sole super-team venture appeared in the second and third issues of UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS, and was easily the strangest of the 60's motley crew.

For "Miracles, Inc.", UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS, and Harvey Comics, however, the story had a by-now-familiar ending. The super-hero boom went bust, and Casper and Richie soon found themselves bereft of costumed crime fighter strips in their line-up.

IV. THE SUPER-TEAM AS BACK-UP FEATURE: THE SENTINELS

If Harvey's super-team hid in the back pages of a bulging anthology title, Charlton was no less lax in promoting their super-group strips. Under the editorship of Dick Giordano, Charlton of the mid-60's boasted a line of "action heroes" [again, not to be mistaken for the other companies' "super-heroes"] which included a new Blue Beetle, a revamped Captain Atom, the mysterious Question, the earliest of the martial-artist heroes, Judo-Master, the oddly-named Peacemaker, and the colorful Thunderbolt. With all of their main hero books devoted to solo characters, where was a poor super-team to find a berth but in the back-up slots? The Sentinels premiered in THUNDERBOLT #54 and retained their spot behind Peter Cannon's red-and-blue-clad alter ego up till his final issue, wherein they were replaced by the Prankster, a future-dwelling hero reminiscent of Harlan Ellison's short-story character, the Harlequin.

Like the Thunder Agents, the Sentinels gained their powers from super-device bestowed on them by a quickly-deceased scientist, which transformed a rock'n'roll trio into costumed heroes [albeit less flamboyant and less humorous than Hanna-Barbera's rockers-turned-super-doers, the Impossibles]. A flight belt was donned by Helio, alias Rick Strong [aside to Jerry Bails: could author Gary Friedrich have been the pseudonymous "Rick Strong" who penned the Human Torch article in ALTER EGO #7?]; a tiara gave ESP abilities to Mentalia, aka Cindy Carson, the group's distaff member and "Crunch" Wilson [apparently never to have a real given name, unlike his contemporary "Flash" Thompson in SPIDER-MAN] was the proud recipient of "Strength gloves", and became the Brute, not to be confused with the later Atlas monster character.

The Sentinels may have been comics' first limited-edition mini-series, for they spent their entire career countering the schemes of a single villain, known as Mindbender, whom they conveniently polished off in their final outing. In this, they were at least more fortunate than their replacement, Harlequin, whose story ended in

a never-to-be-resolved cliffhanger, as the death of the hero craze called a halt to Charlton's and almost everybody else's costumed cut-ups.

V. THE SUPER-TEAM AS ONE-SHOT TRY-OUT: THE TYRO TEAM

The final super-group was also a Charlton product, but rather than lurk in a secondary position in a solo hero's book, the Tyro Team made their debut as one of three features in the first issue of the company's SHOWCASE title, CHARLTON PREMIERE. Along with Spookman and the Shape, this team, another trio, established themselves in what was to be both their first and only appearance: possessing no apparent powers beyond a telepathic mind-link between the members (a gimmick also used by ITC-TV's Champions about the same time), three high-schoolers with the incredibly bland Anglo-Saxon names (even for comics) of Warren Blaine, John Andrews, and David Scott, and the even-more-unlikely nicknames of "Creep", "Specs", and "Swift", don masks and costumes to take on organized and not-so-organized crime.

A second shot at stardom was planned for the Tyros, but PRMIERE, and the Charlton "Action Hero" line folded before they got their chance. From what we got to see of them, tough, this super-team would have been different in its attempt to simulate a real-life, rather than comic-book, situation in which teenagers tried to battle gangsters in secret identities.

As suddenly as it had begun, it was over! By 1968, the last of the Tower line was seeing print and the others were already gone, clearing the racks for DC titles many of which were produced by ex-Charlton staffers (e.g. Creeper, Hawk and Dove, etc.) and the former inhabitants of Marvel's "split-mags" now each in his own book (e.g. Iron Man, Captain American, Hulk, Sub-Mariner, Dr. Strange, SHIELD). The "Big Two" again dominated the super-hero field in comics, and of the super-teams, only theirs remained on the stands.

In our next episode, we'll meet the many new (and some not-so-new) Marvel teams of the 1970's, and explore the fates of those Marvel groups which survived from the 1960's till the present.

VI. MEMBERSHIP
THE T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS

Founded: **THUNDER AGENTS #1**

1. **DYNAMO** (Leonard Brown)
2. **NOMAN** (Dr. Anthony Dunn)
3. **MENTHOR** (John Janus)
   Dies: **THUNDER AGENTS #7**
4. **LIGHTNING** (Guy Gilbert)
   Joins: **THUNDER AGENTS #4**
5. **RAVEN** (Craig Lawson)
   Joins: **THUNDER AGENTS #8**
6. **THE THUNDER SQUAD**
   a) Guy Gilbert [becomes lightning]
   b) Dynamite [John Daniel Adkins]
   c) Kitten [Kathryn Kane]
   d) Weed [William Wylie]
   e) Egghead [real name never revealed]
   Dies: **THUNDER AGENTS #2**

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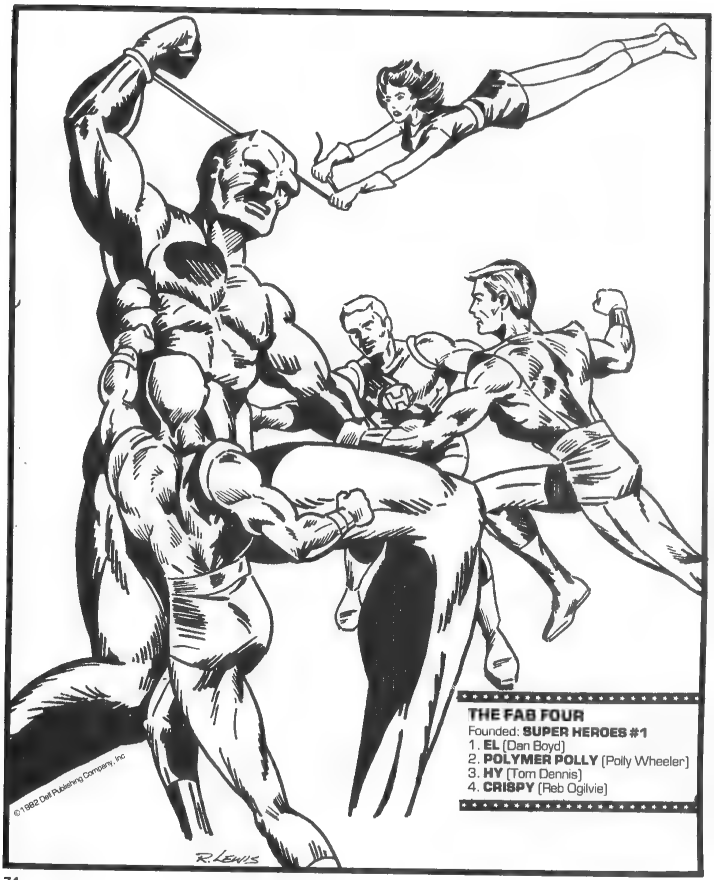
THE TERRIFIC THREE
Founded: **MIGHTY CRUSADERS #5**
1. **MR. JUSTICE** [no secret identity]
2. **STEEL STERLING** [John Sterling]
3. **THE JAGUAR** [Ralph Hardy]

THE ULTRA-MEN
Founded: **MIGHTY CRUSADERS #5**
1. **THE FOX** [Paul Patton]
2. **THE WEB** [John Raymond]
3. **CAPTAIN FLAG** [Tom Townsend]


THE FAB FOUR
Founded: SUPER HEROES #1
1. EL (Dan Boyd)
2. POLYMER POLLY (Polly Wheeler)
3. HY (Tom Dennis)
4. CRISPY (Reb Ogilvie)
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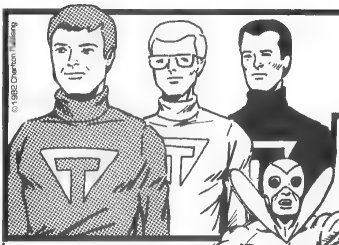
R. LEWIS



©1983 Charlton Publishing

THE TYRO TEAM
Founded: **CHARLTON PREMIERE #1**
1. Werren "Creep" Blaine
2. John "Specs" Andrews
3. David "Swift" Scott

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R. LEWIS

THE MIGHTY CRUSADERS
Founded: **FLY MAN #31/MIGHTY CRUSADERS #1**
1. **FLY MAN** [Thomas Troy formerly the Fly]
2. **FLY GIRL** [Kim Brand]
3. **THE BLACK HOOD** [Kip Burland]
4. **THE SHIELD** [William Joseph Higgins]
5. **THE COMET** [John Dickering]

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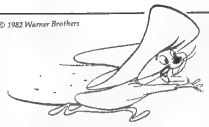
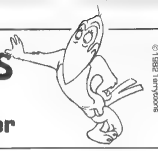


Animated Antics

by Jim Korkis

Saturday Morning Fever



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What instrument does Fillmore the Bear play? Where did Fred Flintstone work? What did the television Felix the Cat say at the end of every cartoon? What is Mr. Magoo's first name? Name Dick Tracy's three cartoon aides.

It is surprising how many people can answer those questions. Most children born within the last two decades received their first introduction to the magic of animation from the flickering images emanating from a screen that is measured in inches instead of feet. Huckleberry Hound became a more familiar house guest than Barney Bear. Scooby-Doo outshines Gerald McBoing-Boing for today's children. Television has reshaped the field of animation and has introduced new generations to a world of wonder.

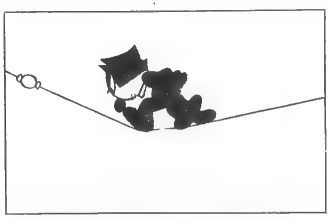
When the major movie factories started closing down their animation departments, they discovered that the enfant terrible, television, was waiting with greedy maw to gobble up the leftovers. Not only did television consume the output of over twenty years of theatrical animation but it encouraged the development of new animation studios that specialized in the creation of animation specifically designed for the budget and time restrictions of television.

Despite the fact that television animation has been in existence for over twenty years, very little accurated information exists. In most articles about animation, discussion of television animation is generally dashed off in a handful of short paragraphs while countless pages reflect over and over on Disney's achievements or "Gertie the Dinosaur". This bias may be a show of resentment toward limited animation (or the lack of imagination in its use) or it may be the result of a few source materials readily available on the countless animated series that flit briefly across the tube and which often disappear without warning only to reappear at odd hours and in odd combinations on local channels.

In 1976, *the complete encyclopedia of television programs* by Vincent Terrace was published. Terrace tried to tackle the herculean task of listing every television show from 1947, including animated cartoons. Unfortunately, some of his misinformation about animated series has been repeated in at least one other book and in countless newspaper television question and answer columns. Terrace listed only the briefest of descriptions of each series and often the voice artists involved; as usual, directors and writers were ignored. In 1981, *The Encyclopedia of Animated Cartoon Series* by Jeff Lenburg appeared. It was certainly one of the most disappointing books to ever appear according to most animation fans since it compounded the errors of the Terrace work. In the television section, there was a minimum of three errors per page and yet this book will probably be used as a primary research source for future articles on television animation because no other source exists. Also in 1981, *Saturday Morning TV* by Gary Grossman was released. The errors in this book are more subtle and may escape detection since they are surrounded by some magnificent first-hand research. However, Grossman's contention that television animation really brought about the death of children's television will not gain him many friends from animation fans.

In any discussion of animation, the term "Saturday Morning" keeps popping up because it symbolizes the greatest concentration of television animation and by tradition, the best shows supposedly are aired during that time period. (In truth, many people felt that the best shows were consigned to the horde of strange kiddie show hosts who interspersed classic animation from several major studios like the Fleischer

GERTIE
SHE'S A SCREAM
SHE EATS, DRINKS AND BREATHES! SHE LAUGHS AND CRIES! DANCES THE TANGO, ANSWERS QUESTIONS AND OBEYS EVERY COMMAND!... YET SHE LIVED MILLIONS OF YEARS BEFORE MAN INHABITED THIS EARTH AND HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN SINCE!!
ACCORDING TO SCIENCE, THIS MONSTER ONCE ROLED THIS PLANET... SKELETONS NOW BEING UNEARTHED MEASURING FROM 90' TO 150' IN LENGTH — AN ELEPHANT SHOULD BE A MOUSE BESIDE GERTIE
THE GREATEST ANIMAL ACT IN THE WORLD !!!



Although Gertie the Dinosaur was not the first animated cartoon, it helped launch the industry. Felix the Cat became the greatest cartoon star of the silent era. The Felix cartoon produced in the late 1920's, despite the lack of sound, were sophisticated, in both humor and film technique.

Studio with inane attempts to involve an audience of children in a variety of games or projects.) Saturday morning signalled the end of a week of school problems which would not again have to be faced until the last minute panic of Sunday evening. Saturday morning was *FREEDOM*. Saturday Morning was *MAGIC*.

It was the magic of talking dogs and ducks and strange superheroes. Many times, animation fans would stumble, out of bed, bleary-eyed, to catch the latest offering. For many animation fans those days have long since disappeared since the anticipation of the new cartoon shows and their actual execution grew so far apart and the level of quality actually offered became so low that it was no longer worth the special effort. Many of those same animation fans are now working at the television animation studios and their affection for their childhood favorites may help spark a rededication to quality.

Looking at the development of Saturday morning programming, definite animation trends become clear. The funny animals gradually surrendered their time to superheroes who were often accompanied by a humanized animal companion. The superheroes were soon defeated not by monsters but by the outcry against senseless violence. The superheroes faded and were soon replaced by bubble gum rock superstars who dominated the scene for awhile and then were replaced or revamped to fit the new "relevant" emphasis that turned Yogi Bear and Tom and Jerry into moralistic teachers.

The following listing of Saturday morning schedules for the last twenty years gives the Eastern Standard Times that the shows were originally broadcast, and, since in some seasons, the networks made countless changes, this listing only reflects the opening Fall schedules. Many thanks go to Christopher Cook and Paula O'Keefe for their help with this project. It is hoped that by printing this listing it may spark the memories of some older fans, intrigue some younger fans, and form the basis for future discussion. Additions and corrections are always appreciated as I am presently researching a book on television animation for future publication. Information may be sent to Jim Korkis care of this magazine. (The answers that started this column are the following: bugle(on Hoppity Hooper show by Jay Ward), Bedrock Sand and Gravel Company, "Righty-O", Quincy, and Joe Jitsu, Go Go Gomez, and Hemlock Holmes. If you are interested in such games, you might want to purchase the *TV Cartoon Trivia Quiz Book*($4.25 plus $1.00 postage to Morgan White, Jr., 106 Strathmore Rd., Brookline, Ma. 02146). The book is poorly designed and has a handful of errors but it easily separates the animation fan from the animation fanatic.) By limiting this listing to just Saturday morning, many interesting syndicated shows like Bob Kane's Courageous Cat or the delightful Dr. Snuggles or Speed Racer are conspicuous by their absence. Eventually, this column will explore all of these series in some form.

1960-61

10 AM
CBS -- Captain Kangaroo
NBC -- Shari Lewis

10:30
NBC -- King Leonardo & His Short Subjects

11 AM
CBS -- Allakazam
NBC -- Fury

11:30
CBS -- Mighty Mouse
NBC -- The Lone Ranger

12 Noon
CBS -- Sky King

12:30
CBS -- My Friend Flicka

1961-62

9 AM
CBS -- Captain Kangaroo

10 AM
CBS -- Video Village Jr.
NBC -- Shari Lewis

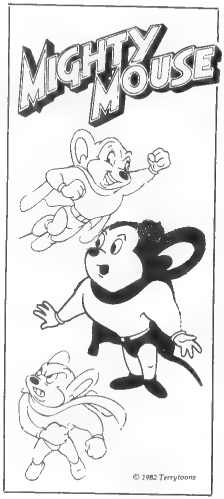
10:30
CBS -- Mighty Mouse
NBC -- King Leonardo

11 AM
CBS -- Allakazan
NBC -- Fury

11:30
CBS -- Roy Rogers
NBC -- local

12 Noon
CBS -- Sky King

12:30
CBS -- My Friend Flicka
NBC -- Mr. Wizard



1962-63

9 AM
CBS -- Captain Kangaroo

9:30
NBC -- Ruff & Reddy

10 AM
CBS -- The Alvin Show
NBC -- Shari Lewis

10:30
CBS -- Mighty Mouse
NBC -- King Leonardo

11 AM
CBS -- Rin Tin Tin
NBC -- Fury
ABC -- Paul Winchell

11:30
CBS -- Roy Rogers
NBC -- local
ABC -- Beany & Cecil

12 Noon
CBS -- Sky King
NBC -- Mr. Wizard
ABC -- Bugs Bunny

12:30
CBS -- Space: The New Ocean
NBC -- Exploring
ABC -- My Friend Flicka

1963-64

8 AM
CBS -- Captain Kangaroo

9 AM
CBS -- The Alvin Show

9:30
CBS -- Tennessee Tuxedo & His Tales

NBC -- Ruff & Reddy

10 AM

CBS -- Quick Draw McGraw
NBC -- Hector Heathcote

10:30

CBS -- Mighty Mouse
NBC -- Fireball XL-5
ABC -- The Jetsons

11 AM

CBS -- Rin Tin Tin
NBC -- Dennis The Menace
ABC -- The New Casper Cartoon Show

11:30

CBS -- Roy Rogers
NBC -- Fury
ABC -- Beany & Cecil

12 Noon

CBS -- Sky King
NBC -- local
ABC -- Bugs Bunny

12:30

CBS -- My Friend Flicka
NBC -- Bullwinkle
ABC -- Allakazam

1964-65

8 AM

CBS -- Mr. Mayor

9 AM

CBS -- The Alvin Show

9:30

CBS -- Tennessee Tuxedo
NBC -- Hector Heathcote

10 AM

CBS -- Quick Draw McGraw
NBC -- Underdog
ABC -- Shenanigans

10:30

CBS -- Mighty Mouse
NBC -- Fireball XL-5
ABC -- Annie Oakley

11 AM

CBS -- Linus The Lionhearted
NBC -- Dennis The Menace
ABC -- Casper

11:30

CBS -- The Jetsons
NBC -- Fury
ABC -- Porky Pig

12 Noon

CBS -- Sky King
NBC -- First Look At
ABC -- Bugs Bunny

12:30

CBS -- My Friend Flicka
NBC -- Exploring
ABC -- Hoppity Hooper

1 PM

ABC -- American Bandstand

1965-66

8 AM

CBS -- Captain Kangaroo

9 AM

CBS -- Heckle & Jeckle
NBC -- The Jetsons

9:30

CBS -- Tennessee Tuxedo
NBC -- Atom Ant

10 AM

CBS -- Mighty Mouse
NBC -- Secret Squirrel
ABC -- Shenanigans

10:30

CBS -- Linus The Lionhearted
NBC -- Underdog
ABC -- The Beatles

11 AM

CBS -- Tom & Jerry
NBC -- Top Cat
ABC -- Casper

11:30

CBS -- Quick Draw McGraw
NBC -- Fury
ABC -- Porky Pig

12 Noon

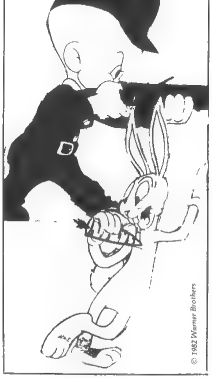
CBS -- Sky King
NBC -- First Look At
ABC -- Bugs Bunny

12:30

CBS -- Lassie
NBC -- Exploring
ABC -- Milton The Monster

1 PM

CBS -- My Friend Flicka
ABC -- American Bandstand



1966-67

8 AM

CBS -- Captain Kangaroo

9 AM

CBS -- Mighty Mouse & The Mighty Heroes
NBC -- Super 6

9:30

CBS -- Underdog
NBC -- Atom Ant

10 AM

CBS -- Frankenstein Jr. & The Impossibles
NBC -- Secret Squirrel
ABC -- King Kong

10:30

CBS -- Space Ghost
NBC -- The Space Kidettes
ABC -- The Beatles

11 AM

CBS -- Superman
NBC -- Cool McCool
ABC -- Casper

11:30

CBS -- The Lone Ranger
NBC -- The Jetsons
ABC -- Magilla Gorilla

12 Noon

CBS -- The Road Runner
NBC -- Top Cat
ABC -- Bugs Bunny

12:30

CBS -- The Beagles
ABC -- Milton The Monster

1 PM

CBS -- Tom & Jerry
ABC -- Hoppity Hooper

1:30

ABC -- American Bandstand

1967-68

8 AM

CBS -- Captain Kangaroo

9 AM

CBS -- Frankenstein Jr. & The Impossibles
NBC -- Super 6
ABC -- Casper

9:30

CBS -- The Herculoids
NBC -- Super President
ABC -- The Fantastic Four

10 AM

CBS -- Shazzan
NBC -- The Flintstones
ABC -- Spiderman

10:30

CBS -- Space Ghost
NBC -- Samson & Goliath
ABC -- Journey To The Center Of The Earth

11 AM

CBS -- Moby Dick & The Mighty Mightor
NBC -- Birdman
ABC -- King Kong

11:30

CBS -- Superman/Aquaman

NBC -- Atom Ant/Sct. Squirrel
ABC -- George Of The Jungle

12 Noon

NBC -- Top Cat
ABC -- The Beatles

12:30

CBS -- Jonny Quest
NBC -- Cool McCool
ABC -- American Bandstand

1 PM

CBS -- The Lone Ranger

1:30

CBS -- The Road Runner

1968-69

8 AM

CBS -- The Go-Go Gophers

8:30

CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner

9 AM

NBC -- Super 6
ABC -- Casper

9:30

CBS -- Wacky Races
NBC -- Top Cat
ABC -- Gulliver

10 AM

CBS -- Archie
NBC -- The Flintstones
ABC -- Spiderman

10:30

CBS -- Batman/Superman
NBC -- The Banana Splits
ABC -- Fantastic Voyage

11 AM

ABC -- Journey To The Center Of The Earth

11:30

CBS -- The Herculoids
NBC -- Underdog
ABC -- The Fantastic Four

12 Noon

CBS -- Shazzan
NBC -- Birdman
ABC -- George Of The Jungle

12:30

CBS -- Jonny Quest
ABC -- American Bandstand

1 PM

CBS -- Moby Dick & The Mighty Mightor

1:30

CBS -- The Lone Ranger

1969-70

8 AM

CBS -- The Jetsons
NBC -- Heckle & Jeckle
ABC -- Casper

8:30

CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner
ABC -- Smokey Bear

9 AM

NBC -- Here Comes The Grump
ABC -- Cattanooga Cats

9:30

CBS -- Dastardly & Muttley In Their Flying Machines
NBC -- The Pink Panther

10 AM

CBS -- The Perils Of Penelope Pitstop
NBC -- H. R. Pufnstuf
ABC -- Hot Wheels

10:30

CBS -- Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!
NBC -- The Banana Splits
ABC -- The Hardy Boys

11 AM

CBS -- The Archie Comedy Hour
ABC -- Sky Hawks

11:30

NBC -- Jambo
ABC -- Gulliver

12 Noon

CBS -- The Monkees
NBC -- The Flintstones
ABC -- Fantastic Voyage

12:30

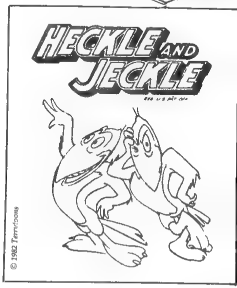
CBS -- Wacky Races
NBC -- Underdog
ABC -- American Bandstand

1 PM

CBS -- Superman

1:30

CBS -- Jonny Quest



1970-71

8 AM

CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner
NBC -- Heckle & Jeckle
ABC -- The Reluctant Dragon & Mr. Toad

8:30

NBC -- Woody Woodpecker
ABC -- Motor Mouse

9 AM

CBS -- Sabrina & The Groovie Coolies
NBC -- Tornfoolery
ABC -- Lancelot Link, Secret Chimp

9:30

NBC -- The Bugaloos

10 AM

CBS -- Josie & The Pussycats
NBC -- Dr. Doolittle
ABC -- Will The Real Jerry Lewis Please Sit Down?

10:30

CBS -- Harlem Globetrotters
NBC -- The Pink Panther
ABC -- Here Come The Doubledeckers

11 AM

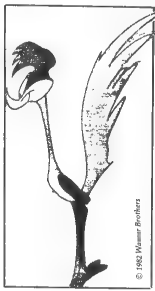
CBS -- Archie's Funhouse
NBC -- H. R. Pufnstuf
ABC -- Hot Wheels

11:30

NBC -- Here Comes The Grump
ABC -- Sky Hawks

12 Noon

CBS -- Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!
NBC -- Hot Dog
ABC -- The Hardy Boys



12:30

CBS -- The Monkees
NBC -- Jambo
ABC -- American Bandstand

1 PM

CBS -- Dastardly & Muttley

1:30

CBS -- The Jetsons

1971-72

8 AM

CBS – Bugs Bunny
NBC – Dr. Doolittle
ABC – Jerry Lewis

8:30

CBS – Scooby-Doo
NBC – Woody Woodpecker
ABC – The Road Runner

9 AM

CBS – Harlem Globetrotters
NBC – Deputy Dawg
ABC – The Funky Phantom

9:30

CBS – Help! It's The Hair Bear Bunch!
NBC – The Pink Panther
ABC – The Jackson Five

10 AM

CBS – Pebbles & Bamm Bamm
NBC – Barrier Reef
ABC – Bewitched

10:30

CBS – Archie's TV Funnies
NBC – Take A Giant Step
ABC – Lidsville

11 AM

CBS – Sabrina
ABC–Curiosity Shop

11:30

CBS – Josie & The Pussycats
NBC – The Bugaloos

12 Noon

CBS – The Monkees
NBC – Mr. Wizard
ABC – Jonny Quest

12:30

CBS – You Are There
NBC – The Jetsons
ABC – Lancelot Link

1 PM

CBS – Children's Films
ABC – American Bandstand

1972-73

8 AM

CBS – Bugs Bunny
NBC – Underdog
ABC – H. R. Pufnstuf

8:30

CBS – Sabrina
NBC – The Jetsons
ABC – The Jackson Five

9 AM

CBS – The Amazing Chan & The Chan Clan
NBC – The Pink Panther
ABC – The Osmonds

9:30

CBS – New Scooby-Doo Movie
NBC – The Houndcats
ABC – Saturday Superstar Movie

10 AM

NBC – The Roman Holidays

10:30

CBS – Josie & The Pussycats In Outer Space
NBC – The Barkleys
ABC – The Brady Kids

11 AM

CBS – Flintstones Comedy Hour
NBC – Sealab 2020
ABC – Bewitched

11:30

NBC – Runaround
ABC – Kid Power

12 Noon

CBS – Archie's TV Funnies
NBC – Around The World In 80 Days
ABC – The Funky Phantom

12:30

CBS – Fat Albert
NBC – Talking With A Giant
ABC – Lidsville

1 PM

CBS – Children's Films
ABC – The Monkees

1:30

ABC – American Bandstand

1973-74

8 AM

CBS – Flintstones Comedy Show
NBC – Lidsville
ABC – Bugs Bunny

8:30

CBS – Bailey's Comets
NBC – Inch High, Private Eye
ABC – Yogi's Gang

9 AM

CBS – New Scooby-Doo Movies
NBC – The Addams Family
ABC – Super Friends

9:30

NBC – Emergency 4

10 AM

CBS – My Favorite Martian
NBC – Butch Cassidy
ABC – Lassie's Rescue Rangers

10:30

CBS – Jeannie
NBC – Star Trek
ABC – Goober & The Ghost Chasers

11 AM

CBS – Speed Buggy
NBC – Sigmund & The Sea Monsters
ABC – The Brady Kids

11:30

CBS – Josie & The Pussycats In Outer Space
NBC – The Pink Panther
ABC – Mission: Magic

12 Noon

CBS – Everything's Archie
NBC – The Jetsons
ABC – Saturday Superstar Movie

12:30

CBS – Fat Albert
NBC – Go!

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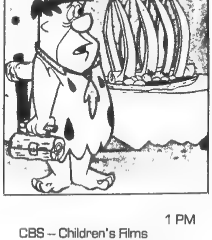

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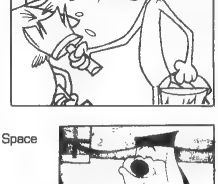
1 PM

CBS – Children's Films
ABC – American Bandstand

1974-75

8 AM

CBS – Speed Buggy
NBC – The Addams Family
ABC – Yogi's Gang



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8:30
CBS -- Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!
NBC -- Wheelie & The Chopper Bunch
ABC -- Bugs Bunny
9 AM
CBS -- Jeannie
NBC -- Emergency 4
ABC -- Hong Kong Phooey
9:30
CBS -- Partridge Family: 2200 A.D.
NBC -- Run, Joe, Run
ABC -- The New Adventures Of Gilligan
10 AM
CBS -- Valley Of The Dinosaurs
NBC -- Land Of The Lost
ABC -- Devlin
10:30
CBS -- Shazam!
NBC -- Sigmund & The Sea Monsters
ABC -- Korg: 70,000 B.C.
11 AM
CBS -- Harlem Globetrotters Popcorn Machine
NBC -- The Pink Panther
ABC -- Super Friends
11:30
CBS -- Hudson Brothers
NBC -- Star Trek
12 Noon
CBS -- U.S. Of Archie
NBC -- The Jetsons
ABC -- These Are The Days
12:30
CBS -- Fat Albert
NBC -- Go! USA
ABC -- American Bandstand
1 PM
CBS --
Children's Films

1975-76

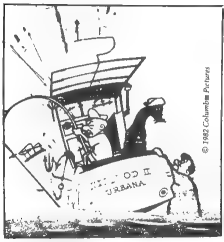
8 AM
CBS -- Pebbles & Bamm Bamm
NBC -- Emergency 4
ABC -- Hong Kong Phooey
8:30
CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner
NBC -- Sigmund
ABC -- Tom & Jerry/Grape Ape
9 AM
NBC -- The Secret Lives Of Waldo Kitty
9:30
CBS -- Scooby-Doo
NBC -- The Pink Panther
ABC -- The Lost Saucer
10 AM
CBS -- Shazam!/Isis
NBC -- Land Of The Lost
ABC -- Gilligan
10:30
NBC -- Run, Joe, Run
ABC -- Uncle Croc's Block
11 AM
CBS -- Far Out Space Nuts
NBC -- Beyond The Planet Of The Apes
11:30
CBS -- Ghost Busters
NBC -- Westwind
ABC -- The Oddball Couple
12 Noon
CBS -- Valley Of The Dinosaurs
NBC -- Josie & The Pussycat
ABC -- Speed Buggy
12:30
CBS -- Fat Albert
NBC -- Go! USA
ABC -- American Bandstand
1 PM
CBS -- Children's Films

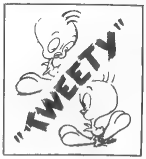
1976-77

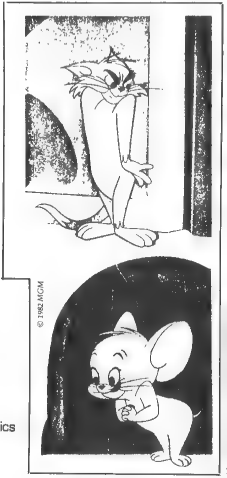
8 AM
CBS -- Sylvester & Tweety
NBC -- Woody Woodpecker
ABC -- Tom & Jerry/Grape Ape/Mumbly
8:30
CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner
NBC -- Pink Panther Laugh-&-½ Hour-&-½ Show
9 AM
ABC -- Jabberjaw
9:30
CBS -- Tarzan: Lord Of The Jungle
ABC -- Scooby-Doo/Dynomutt
10 AM
CBS -- Shazam!/Isis
NBC -- McDuff, The Talking Dog
10:30
NBC -- Monster Squad
ABC -- Krofft Supershow
11 AM
CBS -- Ark II
NBC -- Land Of The Lost
11:30
CBS -- Clue Club
NBC -- Big John, Little John
12 Noon
CBS -- Fat Albert
NBC -- The Kids From CAPER
ABC -- Jr. Almost Anything Goes
12:30
CBS -- Way Out Games
NBC -- Muggsy
ABC -- American Bandstand
1 PM
CBS -- Children's Films

1977-78

7:30
NBC -- The Pink Panther
8 AM
CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner
NBC -- The C.B. Bears
ABC -- Challenge Of The Superfriends
9 AM
CBS -- What's New, Mr. Magoo?
NBC -- The Young Sentinels
ABC -- Scooby's All-Start Laff-A-Lympics
9:30
CBS -- The Skatebirds
NBC -- Archie/Sabrina







10:30
CBS -- Space Academy
NBC -- I Am The Greatest: The Adventures Of Muhammad Ali
11 AM
CBS -- Batman/Tarzan
NBC -- Thunder
ABC -- Krofft Supershow
11:30
NBC -- Search & Rescue
12 Noon
CBS -- Wacko
NBC -- Baggy Pants/Nitwits
ABC -- Weekend Special
12:30
CBS -- Fat Albert
NBC -- Red Hand Gang
1 PM
CBS -- Secrets Of Isis
ABC -- American Bandstand
1:30
CBS -- Children's Films

1978-79

7:30
NBC -- Land Of The Lost
8 AM
CBS -- Popeye
NBC -- Yogi's Space Race
ABC -- Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!
8:30
ABC -- Fangface
9 AM
CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner
ABC -- World's Greatest Superfriends
9:30
NBC -- Godzilla Power Hour
10 AM
ABC -- Scooby's All-Stars
10:30
CBS -- Tarzan/Super 7
NBC -- Fantastic Four
11 AM
NBC -- Krofft Superstar Hour
11:30
ABC -- The Pink Panther
12 Noon
CBS -- Space Academy
NBC -- Fabulous Funnies
ABC -- Weekend Special
12:30
CBS -- Fat Albert
NBC -- Baggy Pants/Nitwits
ABC -- American Bandstand
1 PM
CBS -- Ark II
1:30
CBS -- Children's Films

1979-80

7:30
NBC -- Bay City Rollers
8 AM
CBS -- Mighty Mouse/Heckle & Jeckle
NBC -- Daffy Duck

ABC -- Superfriends
8:30
NBC -- Casper & The Angels
9 AM
CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner
NBC -- Fred & Barney Meet The Thing
ABC -- Plastic Man
10 AM
NBC -- Super Globetrotters
10:30
CBS -- Popeye
NBC -- The New Shmoo
11 AM
NBC -- Flash Gordon
ABC -- Spider Woman
11:30
CBS -- Fat Albert
NBC -- Godzilla
ABC -- Scooby & Scrappy Doo
12 Noon
CBS -- Jason Of Star command
NBC -- Jonny Quest
ABC -- Weekend Special
12:30
CBS -- Tarzan/Super 7
NBC -- The Jetsons
ABC -- American Bandstand
1:30
CBS -- 30 Minutes

1980-81

8 AM
CBS -- Mighty Mouse/Heckle & Jeckle
NBC -- Godzilla/Dynomutt
ABC -- Superfriends
8:30
CBS -- Tom & Jerry
9 AM
CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner
NBC -- Flintstones Comedy Show
ABC -- Fonz & The Happy Days Gang
9:30
ABC -- Richie Rich/Scooby & Scrappy Doo
10:30
CBS -- Popeye
NBC -- Daffy Duck
ABC -- Thundarr The Barbarian
11 AM
NBC -- Batman/Super 7
ABC -- Heathcliff & Dingbat
11:30
CBS -- Drak Pack
ABC -- Plastic Man
12 Noon
CBS -- Fat Albert
NBC -- Jonny Quest
ABC -- Weekend Special
12:30
CBS -- Tarzan/Lone Ranger
NBC -- Drawing Power
ABC -- American Bandstand
1:30
CBS -- 30 Minutes

1981-82

7:30
NBC -- Flintstones Comedy Show
8 AM
CBS -- Kwicky Koala
ABC -- Superfriends
8:30
CBS -- Trollkins
NBC -- Smurfs
ABC -- Heathcliff & Marmaduke
9 AM
CBS -- Bugs Bunny/Road Runner
ABC -- Fonz & The Happy Days Gang
9:30
NBC -- Kid Super Power Hour
ABC -- Laverne & Shirley
10 AM
ABC -- Richie Rich/Scooby & Scrappy Doo
10:30
CBS -- Popeye & Olive
NBC -- Space Stars
11 AM
CBS -- Blackstar
ABC -- Goldie Gold & Action Jack
11:30
CBS -- Tarzan/Lone Ranger/Zorro
NBC -- Spiderman & His Amazing Friends
ABC -- Thundarr
12 Noon
NBC -- Daffy & Speedy
ABC -- Weekend Special
12:30
CBS -- Tom & Jerry
NBC -- Bullwinkle
ABC -- American Bandstand
1 PM
CBS -- Fat Albert
1:30
CBS -- 30 Minutes

STRIP TEASE

Rick Norwood

There is a difference between sci-fi and science fiction. Science Fiction[abbreviated s-f] is written by people who know that a solar system is not a galexy, that there is no sound in a vacuum, and no up or down in free fall. A sci-fi writer, on the other hand, thinks that you can breathe the air on Mars, that nuclear reactors create instant, full grown mutants, and that spaceships bank when they turn. In short, a s-f writer knows what he is talking about, while a sci-fi writer is like a Western writer who thinks that cowboys ride cows.

There is only one s-f comic strip currently, but there is a glut of sci-fi strips, six in all, plus two more recently departed. These were all spawned by the success of the greatest of all sci-fi movies, STAR WARS.

The best s-f strip of all time was the Flash Gordon daily strip from about 1958 to 1965, when Harry Harrison wrote the strip. The best sci-fi strip of all time was the Flash Gordon Sunday strip from about 1936 to 1940, when Alex Raymond was at his height.

Paralleling these two periods in Flash Gordon, there were two periods in the Tarzan comic strip: the Russ Manning years, when we had some outstanding sci-fi, and the more famous Hogarth Tarzan, which had beautiful art and ugly writing. Russ Manning could write both s-f and sci-fi. He created one of the very few s-f comic books:Magnus, Robot Fighter. It is interesting that the best sci-fi comes from people like Russ Manning and George Lucas, who know better but make scientific blunders anyway; not from people like Glen Larson and Cary Bates, who blunder because they don't know any better.

Cary Bates is currently writing Buck Rogers. I already trompled Buck and Flash in my last column, but let me give you one example from a recent Buck Rogers story. "Check out Wilma's bio-scan...her case of K-Virus gave her a quick fever--"; "Raising my body temperature two degrees above 98.6"; "The parasites can't survive in a human body with an above normal temperature!" Leaving aside the question of whether Celsius won't have replaced Fahrenheit by the 25th century, anyone who raised a baby knows that 98.6 is mouth temperature, not internal temperature, which is always a degree or two higher. And a quick check of an encyclopedia confirmy suspicion that a normal human body will vary its internal temperature in the course of a day, from about 99 to about 101 degrees. Another plot twist shot down in flames. And this is not nearly as bad as the things Flash Gordon gets away with.

You do not need a Ph.D. to avoid obvious science goofs. You just need to read Heinlein, Asimov, and Clarke, and be willing to reach for an encyclopedia every now and then.

There have been two previous "booms" of space adventure. One, in the early 1950s, was in response to a movie called Destination Moon. Destination Moon was s-f, but the movies and comic strips and tv shows that tried to imitate its success were mostly sci-fi. Some of the comic strips only lasted a few years, some lasted a decade or so, none is around today: Tom Corbett, Beyond Mars, Twin Earths, Chris Welkin, and Rick Kane--Space Marshal.

The next s-f boom, in the late fifties and early sixties, was sparked by the International Geophysical Year and the beginnings of the space program. It produced only one comic strip, but a very good one: Sky Masters. It might still be around except that a disagreement among the partners who owned the strip sent Jack Kirby and Wallace Wood off to work for comic books. Imagine a history of the comics in an alternate universe in which Sky Masters survived, and Kirby never went to work for Marvel.

Then came the Star Wars boom, and in its wake comic strips: Star Wars, Star Trek, Star Hawks, Jeff Hawke, and the revival of Buck Rogers.

Star Hawks was the most ambitious. It was a comic strip original, not adapted or imported or revived. The daily strip was double size, the first innovation in daily strip format in--well--ever. It was well written and well drawn. Everything was right but the timing. United Features stupidly imported the long running British strip Jeff Hawke and offered it to newspapers just before offering them Star Hawks. A lot of papers bought Jeff Hawke because it came first, but that far out, murky, and very British strip had no hope of catching on with American audiences. It lasted just long enough to shoot Star Hawks down and then crashed. It is sad testimony to the huge popularity of the comic strip medium that it has survived the entrenched stupidity arrayed against it. Star Hawks struggled along in a few newspapers until 1981, but it abandoned its ambitious two-tier format long before that.

There are four sci-fi strips which have survived for more than forty years[with an occasional hiatus]. Buck and Flash, of course, and Brick Bradford, whose Time Top is still running somewhere, though I have not seen it for several years. In some ways the best of the four is Alley Oop.

With a few obvious exceptions, strips which mix humor and adventure do better than the straight adventure strips; strips like Segar's Popeye, Moore's Gasoline Alley, Crane's Wash Tubbs, and V.T. Hamlin's Alley Oop.

Once you get past the premise of cavemen and dinosaurs, there is a surprising amount of s-f mixed into this sci-fi setting. Take, for example, Alley Oop's trip to the moon.

In V.T. Hamlin's version of the first moon landing, the

trip is covered live on television, it is interrupted by commercials, and the public becomes bored with the trip even before the landing occurs. That is some first rate s-f thinking, especially considering that not one of the more famous s-f writers made that prediction. Alley Oop's moon landing took place in 1949!

The current Alley Oop strip is by Dave Graue. While there is nothing particularly wrong with it, there is not enough right with it to hold my interest.

These strips are now uncommon enough for me to give a source (except for Brick Bradford, which I know no source for.) Buck Rogers is in the New Orleans Times Picayune. Flash Gordon is in the Baton Rouge[Louisiana]Morning Advocate. Alley Oop is in the Lafayette [Louisiana] Daily Advertiser. Star Trek is in the Willoughby [Ohio] Lake County News Herald. Star Wars is the only sci-fi strip which still appears in a reasonable number of newspapers. The best place to get the Sunday is the great Asbury Park [New Jersey] Press. The daily is easy to find in, for example, the Houston Post.

Star Wars is also the best of the lot, though not currently as good as some of the classic strips I've mentioned. It began on March 11, 1979 written and drawn by Russ Manning. It was the last work of this wonderful writer/artist. Russ perfectly captured the spirit of Star Wars, right down to the speech inflections of the characters. He wrote one daily story and two Sunday adventures. Then, insufferable editorial stupidity removed Russ as writer on the strip, depriving us of what could have been a year of classic strips which now, because of his tragic death, we shall never see.

At this point, the Sunday and daily story lines merged. Russ illustrated six stories by inferior writers: an asinine story by Steve Gerber, who is old enough to know better, two stupid stories signed Helm, and three fairly good stories by Christensen. At this point Russ Manning's illness prevented him from going on, because the end of the last Christensen story has artwork by Stevens, Hoberg, and Alcala.

Next come two stories that are so bad as to be almost unreadable, with what must be the worst artwork of Alfredo Alcala's career. The first is by Helm, the second

STAR WARS
YOUR HIGHNESS ... CAPTAIN SOLO ... MORE DISTRESSING NEWS--NOT ONLY IS MASTER LUKE MISSING ... ARTOO-DETOO'S VANISHED ALSO!
THREEPIO'S PINTSIZED COUNTERPART USUALLY KEEPS TABS ON THE KID...
SEEMS PRETTY LIKELY WHATEVER'S HAPPENED, THEY'RE TOGETHER! MAYBE WE SHOULD MAKE ONE MORE SEARCH BEFORE--
I'M AFRAID WE'VE A MORE URGENT PROBLEM, HAN...

STAR WARS STORY GUIDE

The Star Wars comic strip runs Sunday and daily, beginning March 11, 1979. Titles in quotes appear on the strip; titles in parentheses are descriptive.

1979:

Sunday: **(Sharlee)** story and art by Russ Manning
(Planet of the Wookiee) story and art by Russ Manning

Daily: **(Black Hole)** story and art by Russ Manning

Sunday & Daily:
"Tatooine Sojourn" story by Gerber, art by Manning
"Princess Leia--Imperial Servant" story by Helm, art by Manning

1980:

"The Second Kessel Runn" story by Helm, art by Manning
"Bring Me the Children" story by Christensen, art by Manning
"As Long As We Live" story by Christensen, art by Manning
"The Frozen World of Ota" story by Christensen, art by Manning, Stevens, Hoberg, and Alcala
"Planet of Kadrill" story by Helm, art by Alcala
"Han Solo at Stars' End" story by Daley, script by Goodwin, art by Alcala

1981:

(Repairs on Ord Mantell) story by Goodwin, art by Williamson
"Darth Vader Strikes" story by Goodwin, art by Williamson
"The Serpent Masters" story by Goodwin, art by Williamson
"Deadly Reunion" story by Goodwin, art by Williamson

STAR TREK® A creation of Gene Roddenberry

By THOMAS WARKENTIN

STAR TREK STORY GUIDE

The Star Trek comic strip runs Sunday and daily, beginning December 2, 1979. Sunday and daily tell the same story.

1979:

(Message from a Moon) story and art by Warkentin

1980:

(Dilithium Dilemma) story and art by Warkentin

"The Real McCoy" story and art by Warkentin

(Klingon Rebels) story and art by Warkentin

(Pyramid) story by Warkentin, art by Warkentin and Rice

(Dry Dock) story by Tom Durkin, art by Warkentin

1981:

"Heads of State" story by Peter Jacoby, art by Warkentin

"It's a Living" story by Warkentin, art by Harris

"The Savage Within" story by DiVono, art by Harris

(Quarentine) story by DiVono, art by Harris

(Omnimind) story by DiVono, art by Harris (and T.W.?)

1982:

(Bebebebeqve) story by Niven,script by Niven and DiVono? art by Harris

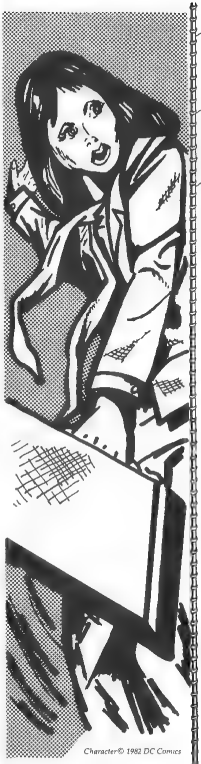
an Archie Goodwin adaptation of the Brian Daley novel Han Solo at Star's End. Then, to the great relief of fans of comic strips and Star Wars, began the Goodwin/Williamson collaboration we still see today.

All of the comic strip stories so far take place between the first two movies, except for the adaptation of the Daley novel, which takes place earlier.

Star Trek is the only current comic strip which is s-f rather than sci-fi. This is good, because Star Trek was also the only s-f television series, and the two Star Trek movies are two of the five s-f movies I can think of. Almost all else, as far as the visual media go, is sci-fi. My standards here are not strict ones, just that the creators show some feel for what the universe is really like: vast, three dimensional, and very different from our little Earth.

Star Trek—The Comic Strip has usually been very well written and has always been wretchedly drawn. Why should this be? There are many talented artists, fan and pro, who would love to draw the strip. If I could order the world to my liking, I would assign Joe Kubert that job. There was some excuse for the art when the writer was drawing the strip. Tom Warkentin was such a good writer, who knew so much Star Trek lore and had such a fine understanding of science fiction, that I was willing to let him learn to draw while he worked on the strip. But there is no excuse for an artist as bad as Ron Harris to be drawing professionally.

The stories Warkentin wrote were very good. My favorite is "The Real McCoy". Sharman DiVono's thee stories were dreadful: confused, characterless, with lots of fighting. Now Larry Niven has taken over the plotting, and the story is interesting once again. Sometimes when a major s-f writer works on a comic strip the result is outstanding, as with Harry Harrison's Flash Gordon. Sometimes, the writer would do better to spend his time on prose: Fritz Leiber's Buck Rogers stories are unmemorable. Whether Larry Niven belongs on a strip remains to be seen. He tends to overwrite—or is that DiVono coming between us and Niven? The strip is one to watch. If they get a decent artist, and get rid of DiVono, it could be one of the great ones.



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The All-American SUPERGIRL

Super-heroes, by their very nature, embody our ideals. Some heroes like Captain America or the Freedom Fighters' Uncle Sam, have an obvious symbolic significance, exemplifying all the best qualities of the American spirit, or at least the writer's personal interpretation of these. But most heroes have a less specific symbolic burden to carry, which is so basic to the very definition of the word "hero" that it is seldom openly stated: super-heroes show us how good guys are supposed to behave.

This in itself seems straightforward enough, but it is a bit more complicated than it appears on the surface. A super-hero is not just a four-color representation of the Perfect Good Person, but, depending on his or her sex, a model of either the Perfect Good Man or the Perfect Good Woman. Due to the arbitrarily sex-differentiated nature of modern American society—or just about any other society, for that matter—there is considerable difference between what is perceived as ideal male and ideal female behavior. This difference is inevitably reflected in comic creator's portrayals of those ideal men and women, super-heroes and super-

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FROM SUPER-GIRL-NEXT-DOOR TO SUPER-CAREER GIRL

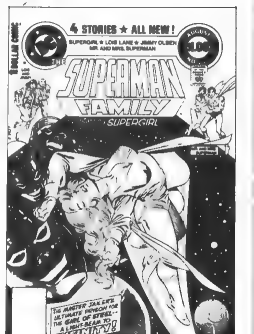
Totally Irrelevant Asides

BY MARGARET O'CONNELL

heroines. Although these male/female distinctions have loosened considerably by now, they are immediately apparent in comics dating from as recently as the 1960s and the mid-70s, especially in the most popular, mainstream strips, such as those dealing with members of the so-called Superman family.

The notion of appropriate behavior conveyed by many of the 1960s strips especially is rather peculiar, to say the least. It is considered necessary for a superior male, namely Superman, to be so all-consumingly devoted to his career that he relegates all other aspects of life to the sidelines, regardless of the harm this may do to others, such as Lois Lane, or to his own emotional health. It is considered acceptable, and even desirable, for such a man to manipulate others for decidedly dubious ends such as smoking out criminals who have sworn to kill Superman's wife on her wedding day, and to set himself up as judge, jury, and executioner, meting out "educational" punishments to everyone he knows for even the most trivial transgressions. Who could forget the endless series of hoaxes perpetrated by Superman in order to "teach Lois a lesson"?—not to be too curious, or not to flirt with other men, or not to be nasty to wimpy Clark Kent, or not to try to pressure her superboyfriend into a marriage he "wasn't ready for," or to recklessly declare that she didn't care if "marriage to me [Superman] could be hazardous to your health!" Note that these "educational" hoaxes were presented as praiseworthy activities that even the victims often approved of when the truth was known, not as merely amusing evidence that even Superman is only human and can't resist the occasional opportunity to get back at pests like the obnoxious Steve Lombard, as analogous incidents are usually handled in current stories.

Supergirl's "ideal" behavior was dramatically different. Writers seemed to regard her formidable array of superpowers as detriments to her image as the perfect all—American girl, and often hastened to assert that she had all the stereotypically "feminine" qualities despite her great strength and superabilities. Perhaps the most extreme illustration of this tendency is Supergirl's ludicrous team-up with Wonder Woman in *BRAVE & BOLD #63* (Jan. 1966), in which the Girl of Steel abruptly abandons crimefighting to become a Paris fashion model in a fit of disgust over being obliged to "make like a muscle-bound super-doll" in front of attractive


4 STORIES ★ ALL NEW!
SUPERGIRL ★ LOIS LANE ★ JIMMY OLSEN
AND MISS. SUPERMAN
SUPERMAN FAMILY
SUPERGIRL
THE MASTER JAX-UR'S ULTIMATE WEAPON AGAINST SUPERMAN—THE SUPER-BEAST OF KRYPTON!

men by whom she would prefer to be regarded as frail and feminine. A more typical example is Superman's remarks after introducing his young cousin to the world in "The World's Greatest Heroine" (*ACTION #285*, Feb. 1962, rpt *GIANT ACTION #360*):"Physically, she's the mightiest female of all time! But at heart, she's as gentle and sweet and as quick to tears—as any ordinary girl! I guess that's why everyone who meets her loves her!"

The idea of Supergirl as just an ordinary girl at heart is one of the recurring themes of the Maid of Steel's strip until well into the 1970s. Especially in the first few years of her tenure in *ACTION*, which began with issue #252 (May 1959), Kara Zor-El/Linda Lee

YES, I'VE CERTAINLY HAD SOME CHANGES IN MY LIFE THIS ISSUE! BUT THEY'RE ONLY THE LATEST OF MANY! IN CASE YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S A BRIEF RUN-DOWN OF THE HISTORY OF...
CAREER!
IT STARTED WITH MY BIRTH IN ARGO CITY, WHICH SURVIVED THE EXPLOSION THAT DESTROYED THE PLANET KRYPTON! I EVEN HAD THE SAME INITIALS AS SUPERMAN!
THEN KRYPTONITE DESTROYED ARGO CITY, AND MY FATHER ZOR-EL SENT ME TO EARTH WHERE I MET MY COUSIN, SUPERMAN!
AS ORIGINALLY SEEN IN "ACTION COMICS" #252, MAY 1959
FROM ACTION #285, FEB. 1962
LATER, I LEARNED THAT ARGO CITY, ZOR-EL AND ALURA WERE ALL SURVIVING BY ENERGY FROM A FANTOM ZONE PROJECTOR!
I GRADUATED FROM MIDVALE HIGH AND WENT TO STARCROSS COLLEGE!
I ALSO GRADUATED!
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(Danvers) was consistently portrayed as a sweet, simple, unsophisticated girl-next-door-type who just happened to have incredible super-powers. In vivid contrast to her cousin, whose sense of himself and his identity was shaped by his super-human status on a very basic level, Kara seemed to regard the exercise of her super-abilities as strictly incidental to the real business of everyday life. When she did use her super-powers, particularly in the three years' worth of adventures that took place before her existence was revealed to the world, Supergirl more often intended to merely amuse herself in outer space with her assorted super-pets than to fight crime or save people from accidents or natural disasters. Although she obediently carried out whatever super-tasks Superman set her and dutifully upheld law and order whenever crimes or other dangerous situations were brought to her attention, Kara wasn't nearly as interested in super-heroics for their own sake as her more career-conscious cousin. Unlike Kal-El, the archetypal example of the hero whose super-identity is the basic reality concealed behind a mere fiction of unprepossessing averageness, Kara/Linda really seemed to be an ordinary all-American girl first, and a conscientious, but not particularly enthusiastic, super-heroine second.

This makes a certain amount of sense when one considers that back home in Argo City, Kara really was an ordinarty girl whose basic self-concept was already formed by the time she acquired super-powers on Earth at age fifteen. Kal-El, on the other hand, attained super-strength, flying ability, etc., at an early age, and was groomed for public service as a super-hero by his foster parents from infancy. However, it seems likely that the differences between the portrayals of the two cousins' attitudes toward super-heroics are not due primarily to editorial attempts at psychological realism, but to the writer's sterotyped notion that boys are interested in careers, but girls care little for anything but domestic and social life.

Although the emphasis on the frivolous, "girlish" qualities that the writers seemed to regard as essential to maintain Supergirl's typicalness and "normality" might reasonably have been expected to slacken in stories written in the early 70s, especially those that portrayed her as a college graduate and working woman, the opposite was true. For much of the time her alter ego headlined *ADVENTURE*, Linda Danvers was presented as a clothes-crazy spendthrift who indulged in "that best of therapy for the female of the species—a new outfit—or several..." (*ADVENTURE #397*, Sept. 1970) with monotonous regularity. In one sequence, only slightly more exaggerated than usual, Linda was shown rushing to a big sale at Nacy's Department Store, thinking, "I'd like to use my super-powers to get there faster, but...that wouldn't be fair to the other girls!" After making the predictable multitude of purchases, Linda, equally predictably discovering that she had spent ner last penny, thought ruefully, "Gosh! I went way over budget on that shopping spree! Why is it I can't resist these big sales?...Oh, well! Those gorgeous outfits were worth it!" (*ADVENTURE #412*, DEc. 1971, pp. 1-2).

Kara's behavior in costume was equally fashion-conscious. *ADVENTURE #397*, with its notorious cover showing Supergirl surrounded by sketches of mod super-uniforms and sighing, "The readers have sent in so many great ideas for a new costume that I just don't know which one to pick," inaugurated an improbably policy of having the Girl of Steel change costumes between bouts of super-heroics at least once per issue. Although the musical-costumes policy had been dropped by the the time Supergirl began her brief 10-issue run in her own title in November 1972, *"New Fashions for Supergirl"* pages were still appearing in *SUPERMAN FAMILY* as late as issue #174 (Jan. 1976).

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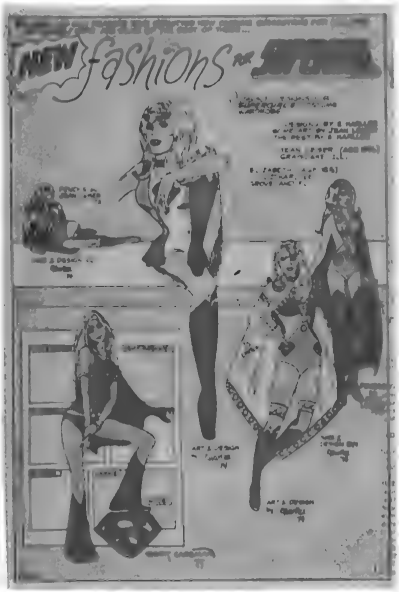

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Although Supergirl's behavior in both her super-heroic and civilian identities was sharply differentiated from her cousin's from the beginning, the exact form that differentiation took varied as the standard cultural ideals of femininity—and editors' interpretations of them—evolved throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Supergirl began as basically a sweet, naive, obedient little girl who would have felt right at home in the overprotective atmosphere of *FATHER KNOWS BEST*. After the first few years, the wide-eyed innocent so aptly epitomized by the unfailingly sweet-faced renderings of longtime *"Supergirl"* artist Jim Mooney began to acquire a slight veneer of sophistication and independence, exemplified by stories like the *BRAVE & BOLD* team-up with Wonder Woman, in which the Maid of Steel expressed dissatisfaction with super-heroics and sought some field more conducive to conventional glamour and romance. This trend culminated in the abrupt introduction in *SUPERGIRL #1* (Nov. 1972) of Kara's long-hidden "secret life-long goal"—to be a glamorous actress. Although this rather ludicrous ambition seemed to have been finally laid to rest when Supergirl's strip first moved into the anthology title *SUPER FAMILY* in 1974, it has been resurrected in recent issues. In *SUPERMAN FAMILY #208*, in a story scripted by Jack C. Harris, Linda Danvers abruptly quit her old guidance-counselor job in a fit of pique and immediately landed a lead role in the soap opera *SECRET HEARTS*. This was a rather miraculous feat for someone who dropped out of drama school for reasons which became obvious from her laughably unconvincing scaredycat act when an Azten super-villainess crashed into the new student advisor's office in her first day at New Athens (in *"Princess of the Golden Sun,"* story-page 8, *SUPERMAN FAMILY #165*, June-July 1974, rpt *BEST OF DC DIGEST #17*).

As a justification of sorts for Supergirl's well-concealed dramatic aspirations, there are, besides the *BRAVE & BOLD* teaup, several stories that feature movie producers, including one in Kandor, who discover Linda and determine to make her a star overnight (a design which at this stage is always mercifully thwarted in some way). In the "superstar" stories, Linda at least flung

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herself wholeheartedly into some glamorous pursuit for a brief while before deciding Tinseltown-type stardom was simply more trouble than it was worth and returning to her original routine of wholesome super-heroics. At KSFTV, on the other hand, she never demonstrated more than the most perfunctory interest in her duties as camera operator, a job which she only drifted into in the first place because journalism was the only field in which her cousin Clark had enough contacts to pull strings on her behalf. Linda appeared to live for lunch hours and holidays on which she could indulge in the shopping sprees described above, and in her usual doomed romances. The job itself quickly became merely a feeble excuse for Linda/Supergirl to spend a lot of time trading insults with her archenemy of the moment, Luthor's niece Nasthalthia (better known as Nasty), and to fall in love with not one, but two, of her male co-workers.

When the flighty Kryptonian finally quit KSFTV and moved into her own title, scripted mostly by Cary Bates, the focus shifted back to the glamour of drama school (where Linda immediately landed the female lead in *ROMEO AND JULIET*) for *SUPERGIRL*'s short run. But when that book was cancelled and Supergirl moved into the new *SUPERMAN FAMILY*, along with Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen, her new writer, Elliot Maggin, discarded the concept of Supergirl as star-struck average American girl and replaced it with the idea of Kara as blase and bored by the fame she'd received for the super-deeds as she had little interest in, longing for the anonymity of being just an ordinary young woman—the one thing that this new, acknowledgedly unaverage Supergirl could never be.

From this point on, Supergirl began to become more interested in her civilian (and eventually her super-heroic) career for its own sake. In "*Princess of the Golden Sun*," Supergirl's first new story in *SUPERMAN FAMILY* (*SMF #165*, July 1974), Supergirl renounced all interest in super-heroics and proclaimed her hopes of fulfillment through a more down-to-earth career as a guidance counselor. As she "reminded" her startled cousin, "I've told you how I feel before, superman...how I'd rather be a genuine flesh-and-blood woman than a supergirl! I mean, it was a kick at first—the fame—the glory—concealing my secret identity—but it was all piled on my shoulders the day I landed on Earkth...And...well, I'm just not the world-saver you were born to be!" (p. 5). Later, on the plane to Florida, Linda further elucidates her motives in an earnest thought balloon: "I'm really excited about my new job! Cousin Kal-El can have the glory and the power—and the responsibilities-while I help people one-to-one! I'll be able to do just that as student advisor to the teen-age girls...at New Athens Experimental School!" (p. 6).

In a way, this is just a re-working of Kara/Linda's earlier view of super-heroics as little more than an extracurricular activity having little connection with her real life. Once again, Linda shows herself to be less interested in spectabular world-saving feats than in everyday life and personal relationships. However, Maggin presents this attitude in a much more positive light than did earlier writers, whose emphasis on Kara's frivolous use of her powers to have fun in outer space tended to make her seem somewhat childish and irresponsible. Maggin, on the other hand, manages to transform his heroine's traditional preference for more down-to-earth activities into something more than a selfish predilection for playing average American teen-ager while Cousin Kal-El saves the world. He accomplishes this by the deceptively obvious, but ingenious means of having Linda simply reject one form of public service for another, choosing the one-to-

one personal involvement of guidance counseling over the flashy fame of super-heroics.

As a student advisor at New Athens, Linda is at least somewhat out of the glare of super-hero publicity, but she is still helping peole. In fact, she is still surreptitiously using her super-powers to help people, as she does in this same first New Athens story when she uses super-speed to search through mountains of records to help a student involved in a custody fight between her adoptive parents and a woman claiming to be her biological mother. And, despite her expressed hope that she has "left Supergirl behind me," Linda does go into action as the Maid of Might when its urgently necessary. In this she is distinctly unlike certain other disillusioned super-heroes, such as Spider-Man in the January/February 1980 storyline of his daily newspaper strip, whose (temporary) decisions to give up crimefighting often lead them to callously turn their backs on real emergencies which cannot easily be handled by conventional means.

Unfortunately, Maggin's original twist on the old theme of Supergirl as ordinary citizen was dropped when he left the Maid of Steel's strip after scripting a mere three new stories (in *SMF #165, 168,* and *171*) and dialoguing a fourth over a Cary Bates plot (in *SMF #177*). When Bates and then Jack C. Harris took over the scripting chores on her *SUPERMAN FAMILY* strip, Supergirl stopped complaining about the alienation of female super-beings "who'd rather *not* be different!" and returned to fighting super-villains and bug-eyed monsters. However, the "career" theme of the strip continued, though the emphasis shifted from Linda's civilian accomplishments to her super-heroic ones. In other words, Supergirl was now portrayed pretty much the same way male heroes traditionally had been—as a dedicated crusader who unhesitatingly gave super-heroics priority over civilian life. The theme of Supergirl as basically an ordinary young girl, or as a jaded super-celebrity who wanted to be ordinary, had been abandoned, apparently for good.

Unfortunately, this accomplished little more than depriving the Supergirl strip, always in danger of becoming merely a watered-down clone of the Superman series, of one of its few distinctive elements. It also created yet another implausible breach of the character's established contruity. Not content with having Kara abruptly forget her Maggin-induced resolution to leave heroic stunts behind in favor of helping people on a one-to-one basis as Linda Danvers, new scripter Jack C. Harris demonstrated in his third *"Supergirl"* story that the "Mighty Ms." had been far from successful in her attempts at impersonating a typical guidance counselor, or even a dutiful daughter—a revelation which suggests that current reports of Kara's acting ability have been highly exaggerated, to say the least. In *"The Visitors from the Void"* (*SMF #184,* Aug. 1977), Linda's boss, Dean Betsy Lyman, reacts to her employee's sudden request for a leave of absence with an anxious thought balloon: "She's a strange girl...excellent at her job, but she's distant—as if she has some sort of secret private life—" (p. 9). As for Linda's relationship with her beloved foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. Danvers, a caption on p. 5 informs us that "For the first time in many years [!], Edna Danvers is eye with her daughter..." Shortly afterward, a repentant Supergirl thinks, "I feel like a heel! I haven't called her [Mrs. Danvers] for months!" (p. 7).

What all this amounts to is that Supergirl was being retroactively afflicted with the super-hero-as-loner syndrome, a tendency to become progressively more and more isolated from everything and everyone not encountered in the course of saving the world from some horrendous menace. Heroes who fall victim to this syndrome rapidly lose touch with all their non-super friends, relatives, and co-workers,

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THAT EVENING...
ANTHONY LAUGHED AT ME!
NICKY ROARED!
DON'T WORRY! IT WILL ALL BE FORGOTTEN WHEN I GIVE A DINNER FOR THE SWANKIEST PEOPLE IN TOWN!
CINDY, WHEN YOU SERVE--BE SURE TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT! I DON'T WANT YOU TO EMBARRASS US!
AT THE DINNER PARTY...
I WAS TOLD TO KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT! BUT I DON'T NEED TO OPEN IT TO USE MY SUPER-VENTRILOQUISM! I'LL SEE THAT "DEAR OLD MOTHER" MAKES THE KIND OF IMPRESSION SHE'LL NEVER FORGET!
© 1982 DC Comics

and spend so little time out of costume that their secret identities virtually wither away, as with Green Arrow's and Black Canary's, or are officially put on hold, as with Supergirl's leave of absence from her job, which only ended in *SUPERMAN FAMILY #191* (Oct. 1978).

Once she finally returned to New Athens, Supergirl again acquired a (very) small cast of supporting characters, including one Peter Barton, the latest in a long line of thoroughly unsuitable men on whom lovesick Linda developed an unrequited crush. However, Kara's super-identity remained uppermost throughout all this, to the point of reducing the New Athens Experimental School to the most peripheral of backgrounds for her rather uninspired adventurs. Fortunately, a new scripter Marty Pasko's recent reintroduction to the strip of Linda's high school best friend Lena Thorul (in *SMF #211*) seems a promising first step toward the long-overdue revitalizing of Supergirl's secret identity, which the new soap-opera setting along seemed unlikely to accomplish.

As can be seen from the above, ever since Supergirl began appearing in *SUPERMAN FAMILY*, the glamour/frivolity theme has virtually vanished from her strip, while the career theme became dominant. At first, under Elliot Maggin, this career theme was focused primarily on Linda Danvers' career as a guidance counselor, but when Maggin left the strip, the focus soon shifted to Kara's career as a superheroine whose personal life takes second place to her crime-fighting duties. However Supergirl's new devotion to her super-heroic career as such has been most insisitently portrayed in stories which have no place in the regular continuity of her own strip, especially those scripted by Gerry Conway.

Supergirl's first appearance as the kind of conspicuously career-obsessed superhero her cousin (and most other male heroes) used to be was in a three-part story scripted by Conway which was published in *SUPERMAN #307-309* (Jan. - Mar. 1977). This was the memorable tale in which Supergirl, the erstwhile second-stringer (who was still muttering ruefully, "My cousin would probably know exactly what to do...but I don't have Superman's experience!" in a back-up story by Denny O'Neil in *ADVENTURE #450* the same year), swaggered into her cousin's book to set the suddenly inept and neurotic Man of Steel straight as if he were the "inexperienced" one and she were the old pro.

In the first story, Kara arrives just as Superman, crazed with fear that Earth will be destroyed by pollution as Krypton was destroyed by natural disaster, is about to fling a potentially hazardous super-tanker into orbit. Hands on hips, the Maid of Steel asks manacingly, "And just where do you think you're going cousin?" Kal-El has barely begun to explain before Kara drags him off to the Fortress of Solitude, where she smashes every Kryptonian trophy in sight and tells him flatly that the entire lost planet is and always was a figment of his diseased imagination. "Face it, Clark—you've been ill! You created the whole Krypton fantasy to escape the reality of your life—a reality you couldn't face!" she proclaims again and again, until Superman is finally goaded into making the memorable statement, "I'm warning you, Supergirl—don't treat me like a child!" It is not until the conclusion in *SUPERMAN #309* that Kara's motive for this remarkable behavior is revealed. As she tells her infuriated cousin, who has finally figured out that it is all a hoax: "The Kandorians are behind the entire fraud...because they were concerned about your sanity...The way you were acting toward Earth—trying to protect it from mankind, interfering in matter which were none of your business—matters which should rightfully be decided by humanity itself!...Well, you frightened us! You wanted to stop Earth from followng Krypton's path...into destruction...but you were becoming obsessed with it, going crazy!...Kandorian psychologists—unlike Earth psychologists—feel that an emotional problem should be removed, rather than solved! And so they—and I—decided to 'remove' your problem—by removing [your] belief in Krypton!" (pp. 24-25).

This is table-turning with a vengeance, but its connection with Supergirl's increased interest in her career may be somewhat unclear until we recall the endless "for their own good" hoax stories of the 1960s, in which Superman often acted just as brutally for much less reason. By appointing herself keeper of her cousin's sanity, Supergirl is stepping into the time-honored role of the superhero as professional meddler in other people's lives, complete with the

obligatory hare-brained motivation.

Supergirl's next imperious appearance in her cousin's book, in the "journalists' disease" story of *SUPERMAN #311-315* (May-Aug., 1977), scripted by Marty Pasko, emphasizes an element only hinted at in the *"Krypton-Delusion"* tale: the importance of maintaining proper professional standards in the super-hero field. Once again, Kara arrives to complain about her cousin's inappropriate behavior—this tim e, his inadequate handling of the outbreak of journalists' disease in Central City. "You had the means to cure the disease-victims, cousin—and I want to know what happened to it!" (*SUPERMAN #312*, p. 5), Supergirl demands accusingly, obviously concerned that Kal-El's inept performance will reflect badly on superheroes in general and herself in particular. When Superman brokenly confesses that he seems to have accidentally killed the one person who could have cured the stricken journalists, Kara remains profesionally cool and in command of the situation, telling him, "C'mon, now...you've faced worse crises before—and you'll solve this one, too!" (p.7). She even has to tell him what to do later in the fight with the villain, Amalak, the Kryptonian-Killer, though she is the one who winds up being captured and (temporarily) held hostage.

The most recent notable instance of Supergirl's new incarnation as an ambitious professional woman who puts her career before all else is the *"Superwoman"* segment of the book-length imaginary/possible future story in *SUPERMAN FAMILY #200* (April 1980). Gerry Conway's version of what Superwoman/Linda Danvers will be doing 20 years from now, and how and why she'll be doing it, is a textbook example of his wincingly simplistic misinterpretation of feminist ideas, complete with trite rhetoric. "There are times when I almost regret pursuing two full careers—as Superwoman and stateswoman!" Florida Governor Linda Danvers muses as she switches to her familiar red, blue, and yellow uniform. "But when I realized that my responsibilities to my adopted home and its people didn't end with fighting dangers as a super-heroine, I could see I had no choice! From school guidance counselor to state governor in just a few years...it's been an incredible journey...and it has taken its toll, mostly on my personal life! I've never married...and my relationships rarely last more than a year...but still, I'm lucky...I'm living my life the way I want to live it, not by someone else's standards, or in someone else's role!" (pp. 36-37).

So saying, she flies into her apartment, which we soon discover she shares with a man who obviously knows all about both her identities, though he himself remains carefully unidentified to the reader throughout. If Superwoman's realtionships "rarely last more than a year," and she was as open with all the earlier men in her life as she is with the current one, the state of Florida must be postivisely littered with men who know that Governor Danvers and Superwoman are one and the same. Unless she really does have a rock garden of discarded boyfriends whom she's turned to stone, as she pretended to in *ADVENTURE #389* (Feb. 1970). Either way, the situation is mind-boggling.

Incredibly, comics and American culture have changed so dramatically since 1959 that Supergirl, perhaps the best-known four-color exemplar of ideal womanhood until the advent of the *WONDER WOMAN* TV show, has been transformed into something her original creators and fans would find virtually unrecognizable. The sweet, obedient little Jim Mooney Supergirl of the early days may be no more completely accurate as a representation of the early days may be no more completely accurate as a representation of the ideal female of the 1950s and early 1960s (she is not, after all, much like Marilyn Monroe) than the blonde barracuda Gerry Conway repeatedly presented us with is as a portrayal of the ideal woman of the 1970s and 1980s. (Although the Conway-type stereotype of the arrogant, hard-driving career woman has become acceptable as a frequent image in recent media presentations of all kinds, it seems unlikely that many women would want to be her or many men would want to meet her, since she is still presented as basically a heartless bitch.)

However, the enormous difference between the original and current versions of even a relatively innocuous female character like Supergirl, who was never intended to have any of the specifically feminist overtones of a Wonder Woman or a Ms. Marvel, shows that society's images of women and what they should be like have changed drastically in the past 21 years. Unfortunately, if chracters like the Gerry Conway, Supergirl, Power Girl, Ms. Marvel, and such lesser luminaries as Thundra and the obnoxious Her are any example, the over-simplified four-color image of women may be shifting away from the dreary treacle of the feminine mystique to the ruthless arrogance and rampant careerism of an old-fashioned machismo even the more traditional male characters, like Superman, are beginning to abandon.

Jolly Good Show!

A (P)Review Of Camelot 3000

by David Kirk

Camelot 3000, written by Mike Barr and drawn by Brian Bolland, is quite something as special projects go. It's a direct-sales only title, not governed by the Comics code, and it's to be printed on Baxter stock paper, ensuring crisp detail and vibrant color, and it'll sell for a dollar a crack. DC has never tried anything like this before, so they're trying their utmost to make it a success--advertising it with a heavy-stock flyer in their own comics, keeping the fan press well-informed and well-supplied with pictures to print, to keep it in the fans' minds, and last and most germane to this article, supplying Xerox copies of the first issue to the fan magazines, so that (theoretically) we'll help trumpet the news that **Camelot 3000** is the greatest thing since sliced bread, and you should all buy it.

Okay, we'll say it. Go ahead and buy it. It's not the greatest thing since sliced bread (it won't even fit in your toaster), but it's a pretty good comic book, and it is well worth a try, for any fan.

I can't comment on the printing values, or the color, since what I've seen is a black-and-white Xerox, but that stuff is really secondary anyhow. If the creative part isn't any good, all the slick printing in the world won't save it. So what about the creative part?

Well, okay, here goes: **Camelot 3000** is set in Earth's future, in the year 3000, when mankind is facing an alien invasion, and losing. Green (or so I assume--they oughta be green) scaly aliens are overrunning various parts of the world and causing destruction, carnage, and death. But all is not lost, for while the people of Earth are pretty much helpless against the alien threat, there is a hero to save them. The legends have foretold that the great King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table

would return someday, in the time of England's greatest need, to provide his people with a savior--and this alien threat is apparently need enough. Arthur is freed from his magical suspendium, and sets about rousting up Merlin and saving the world. I assume the knights of the Round Table are going to get into this somehow, but the first issue basically concerns itself with the situation the world is in, and the returns of Arthur, Merlin, and Ex-

calibur. And as far as it goes, **Camelot 3000 #1** is a lot of fun.

It looks like adventure along the lines of **Star Wars**—where we have good old fashioned heroes up against an appreciably evil menace, all in the midst of laser-blasts and other impressive special effects. With **Camelot**, however, the romance of the heroism is heightened because of the heroes involved. Unlike Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, and crew, these aren't just old-fashioned heroes. Arthur and Merlin are old heroes, back again, and almost everyone is familiar enough with some part of the Arthurian legend to bring a ready-made admiration to the book, and a willingness to accept these heroes as heroes. The resonance of the name "King Arthur" does more for this book than any character establishment on a new hero could. Let's face it, King Arthur is impressive, and a figure like that in the midst of what is currently so popular—space opera—is a terrific idea.

And Arthur is portrayed well. Though the concept is an odd enough one that it could be easily mishandled [by a straight-faced presentation of a medieval king fighting aliens in the future, or having Arthur beset with angst over what the world's come to], Mike Barr avoids it by concentrating on Arthur's nature, not his situation. Once Arthur is awakened, he is apprised of the situation, and seems to take very much in stride. There are monsters out menacing the people—okay, he can understand that, and knows what one does in a situation like that—fights the monsters. That these monsters have futuristic technology doesn't faze Arthur, nor does the fact that the humans he's aiding are pretty advanced. He views ray-guns, airships, nuclear power plants, etc. with an air of acceptance. They're odd but not unbelievable—in fact, they probably compare with the dragons and mages of old, but there's just a lot more of them in 3000. One thing that didn't bother Arthur any, but I'd like to know...The Lady of the Lake, who returns Excalibur to Arthur, is seen in **Camelot 3000 #1** as inhabiting a nuclear power plant. It's not likely that we'll get any explanation for this, but it's got me curious, if nothing else. What's she doing here?

Anyhow, getting back to Arthur—it's very refreshing to see such a relaxed, together hero in this age of increasingly psychotic and/or whiny characters.

Tom Prentice, the young Briton who finds and frees Arthur, is another matter, however. He seems to be the character with the "normal" attitude, who can make sure we the audience know when to be impressed. While Arthur takes the year 3000 in stride, Tom doesn't take Arthur in stride at all. He's confused about what's going on from beginning to end. His confusion and unwillingness to accept what is going on is occasionally funny, as when Arthur, in almost-competent command of a commandeered alien airship, tells Tom, who still doesn't accept that this guy **is** King Arthur, that they're off to Stonehenge to find Merlin, and Tom replies "Oh, fine!" However, his incessant wonderment and his "what's going on here" attitude get wearying after a while, and he comes off as something of a jerk. This may also be due to the fact that once he frees Arthur, he has nothing really to do in the issue except narrate a flashback to tell Arthur and we readers what 3000 A.D. is like. Hopefully, as the series progresses he'll find something to do, and he'll get more interesting.

The other main character who rears his head in #1 is Merlin, and he works out quite well indeed. What I always liked about Merlin in the old legends was his manner of doing things in his own way, like choosing to give the Babe Arthur to Sir Kay, and not telling him who it was, or telling Uther where his son had gone, and then conjuring up the sword in the stone years later to prove Arthur's status. He stepped on a lot of toes, but he had a lot of energy and got things done. **Camelot 3000**'s Merlin is much the same. He whisked Arthur and Tom off via teleportation without telling them where they're going until they get there, allows Tom to panic at the sight of oncoming aliens before he reveals that they're under an invisibility spell, and even plays fast and loose with Arthur, whisking Excalibur away just before Arthur grabs it. He has his reasons, and he could easily tell Arthur what they are, and make things easier all around, but he doesn't, because he's a cantankerous old fart [or to put it another way, he moves in strange and

LODGING, MEDICINE, TRANSPORTATION...ALL NECESSARY, YET ALL TREATING A SYMPTOM, NOT THE DISEASE!
ACROSS THE CHANNEL, ALIENS ARE ESTABLISHING A BASE FOR GOD-KNOWS-WHAT PURPOSE IN ENGLAND...
© 1982 DC Comics

mysterious ways). And that he's such a powerful cantankerous old fart makes him a very appealing character. Merlin is the best thing this book has produced so far.

We get a glimpse of two other characters in **Camelot 3000 #1**, and while it's difficult to tell what part they're going to play in this little drama, they're at least intriguing. Jules Futrelle is a Frenchmen, the richest man in the world, and he's a real sweetie, too. He's donating money, equipment, medical services, and what have you to aid the stream of refugees leaving England, and even gives his [presumably enormous] estate over as housing for the refugees. And still he thinks he's not doing enough.

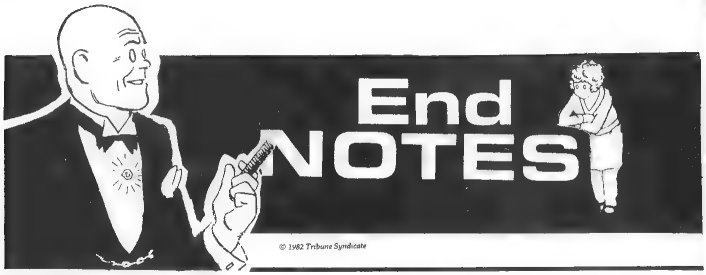
The other player is a woman by the unlikely name of Commander Action. I hope that's some sort of spelling mistake, because she's only called by name once in this issue, and "Action" is just too campy a name to fit with the rest of the book. Whatever, she's a military commander of some sort, American, and seems to be the book's grim, purposeful character. That she is a woman in an otherwise all male cast is laudable, but I question whether or not the current trend in capable, independent women hasn't been simply a return to the all-male casts of yesteryear, except some of them are shaped differently. I'm not arguing that women should go back to being the cringing, helpless stereotypes they once were, but this apparent crusade to replace all "feminine" characteristics with agressive macho values seems to me to be even less representative of the real world than ever.... Well, anyway, maybe Commander Action isn't so machismo as she seems, or maybe more women will be introduced, or maybe even some male characters will show some warmth and emotion. That'd be a switch.

Moving on to the art...it's difficult to say much about Brian Bolland except to say that it's easy to see why he's so popular. His art is pleasantly stylish, and exceedingly slick. His stuff doesn't look that much different from that of a lot of other fan favorites, with a Neal Adams-esque approach to detail and figure work, but it's certainly to his credit that he isn't merely imitating Adams—he does have craft and skill. Too many artists are content to get the style of some notable artist down pat, and neglect the underpinnings of competent storytelling that got said fan fave where he was. Too often, that makes the imitator a success. Well, while Bolland looks a lot like one of the Adams crowd, he at least knows how to construct a convincing figure, show emotion, and lay out a very competent page. He occasionally shows story-telling problems, as on page seven, when Tom runs full tilt into a wall. The art is very skward and unconvincing, but luckily, such problems don't crop up much.

Bolland's major problem is his very stylishness. He draws everything crisply, clearly, and cleanly, and while that tells the facts of the story plainly, it doesn't do much for mood. When he draws the catacombs under Glastenbury Tor, they look as if they'd been vacuumed and touched up every Tuesday, they're so clean and regular. His Stonehenge, though pretty, looks like a restaurant wall mural, rather than an ancient, fog-beshrouded druidic ruin. but since most of the story takes place in the antiseptic reference frame of the year 3000, this cleanliness of style seldom annoys. Even in these stainless steel surroundings, however, a touch more mood and atmosphere would have enhanced Barr's sparse script, in a manner that Bolland's detailed realism cannot. Still, the art is functional, and pleasent to look at, and will probably be the book's biggest draw, if the comics fans follow their usual pattern.

Bruce Patterson supplies the inks, and while he is the sort of inker who makes artists palatable for the fan appetite, I can't help but think someone else would have been more appropriate. Bolland already had the crispness and sheen that Patterson gives to an artist, so his style is almost redundant, and doesn't add to the areas where Bolland needs it. I think that an inker who could have put more life, realism, and atmosphere into Bolland's pencils, someone like Tom Sutton, would have added an element of thrill and excitement to **Camelot 3000** that would make the book unquestionably heroic. But still, Patterson is at least competent, and while he doesn't add a whole lot to the book, he doesn't hurt it any either.

I've been more critical of **Camelot 3000** in this review than I'd intended, because I really did enjoy the book immensely. The faults I've listed don't really make themselves known while one is reading it, but only under analysis. As a critic, I feel compelled to point out the issue's defects, but as a reader, I'm more than happy to see **Camelot 3000** come out. It's a nifty idea for a series, and a lot of effort has gone into making it a well-crafted comic book, something there aren't anywhere near enough of around these days. As I said at the beginning of the article, check it out. You owe it at least that much, to see if it appeals to you enough to buy all twelve issues of it, and encourage DC to put out more of these projects. You'll probably like it.



During the late Spring, Summer, and Autumn of 1981, Leonard Starr's *ANNIE* has hearkened to its roots in Harold Gray's original *LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE* comic strip through bringing back an eccentric scientist named Eon and the mysterios God-like Mr. Am, two characters who made their debut in the 1930s. Starr did not merely revive the characters; he also built stories around them that reworked the thematic content of the narratives in which they originally appeared. In doing so, these recent *ANNIE* story-lines provide insights into the ways in which Starr's treatment of the series differs from Gray's, and also into the ways in which the strip nevertheless remains the same.

It was appropriate that the cantankerous scientist Eon made his first appearance in 1981 by bursting up from a mysterious mound in the ground; after all, Eon had been killed and prematurely buried back in a sequence in 1935. But Starr's scientist is actually Ezra Eon, the look-alike, act-alike brother of the Eon who was killed long ago, Eli, inventor of Eonite. Both brothers are hot-tempered and hardly refined in their manners of talking, but they also have senses of humor and seem to take a child-like joy in working on their projects. Each is also a kinder and wiser man than he appears at first glance. Annie's wealthy adoptive father Oliver "Daddy" Warbucks declares that Eli "was kindness and generosity itself." (8/14/35) Ezra becomes Annie's advisor on her

WAR(BUCKS) AND PEACE

OR, IS AM WHAT AM WAS?

A Comparison of the Work of Harold Gray and Leonard Starr on Annie

by Peter Sanderson

OPERATIONS FOR PAUPERS! SUPPORT FOR THAT GENILE OLD BUM, JOHN STUMBLE! NOW PAINTING AND ROOFING THE CHURCH— AND A NEW PIPE ORGAN! WHERE WILL SHE STOP WITH HER DEMANDS?
3-30-33
SHE'LL BANKRUPT ME! IT'S ALL WELL AND GOOD TO KEEP HER QUIET, BUT IF IT COSTS ME MY FORTUNE, WHERE IS THE PROFIT?
WELL, IT MIGHT BEAT GOING TO JAIL FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE— DON'T FORGET THAT—
WHAT? HA! A FINE SON! I BELIEVE YOU WOULD BETRAY ME, IF YOU HAD A CHANCE—

confused feelings about Warbucks and her newfound friend Angela (7/3/81) and acts as Warbucks' impassioned defender in a confrontation with the "villain" of the piece.

The Eon brothers are both scientific wizards who produce wonders with which their benevolent capitalist monarch Warbucks hopes to save mankind from deprivation. Ezra is working on a means to solve the oncoming energy crises brought on by the steady depletion of Earth's fossil fuel resources: he hopes to be able to use the heat from the Earth's underground magma to produce a virtually unlimited supply of energy of energy without creating any pollution or harmful radiation. "Man can't expect this teeny planet t'keep supportin' him without goin' into uncharted territory," contends Ezra (7/29/81), and Warbucks is the visionary willing to lead the exploration from wholly selfless motives: "I seem to be incapable of seeing life in other than purely practical terms," Warbucks explains. "People must be fed, sheltered, clothed. . . and with the present population—fully one quarter of all the people who ever walked the Earth are alive right now! Well, these people must be provided for." (8/2/81) Years before, brother Eli had invented eonite, a substance ten times stronger than steel. Warbucks proclaimed that "Eonite will not wear out; hence, in a few years all shacks and slums will be eliminated. Living costs will fall. National wealth will increase tremendously. . . ." (7/31/35) "This nation is on the eve of its greatest advance in history, and *this* time there'll be no crash at the other end. [Remember, this story-line appeared during the Great Depression of the 1930s.] This is to be a permanent step upward for every person in the land, thanks to eonite." (7/15/35)

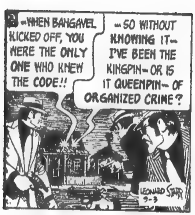
Notice that Starr's Warbucks wants to be the benefactor of all humanity, but that Gray's Warbucks' brand of patriotism leads him to focus his attention almost entirely on "this nation." Asked about whether he will use Eonite to help people of other countries, Warbucks responds, "Generosity to all other nations is noble, but let's take care of our own countrymen first, eh? Then worry about others." (7/13/35) Warbucks' philosophy appears to go beyond the mere belief that charity begins at home, however; to him, America must be Number One. "Our people will be the happiest and most prosperous people on Earth," he declares, thanks to eonite (7/13/35) But there may be a dark side to this sentiment as well. "The world will require eonite," he explains. "We alone can supply it. Then this nation will control world trade." (7/13/35) Control, eh? For the moment, Warbucks does not sell eonite to any country excepting the United States, however. Still, Gray makes the point that Warbucks has no interest in personally dominating the world in any way, as we shall see.

Both of these Eon stories concern themselves with the way, as Gray and Starr both see it, that people blindly obstruct the plans of the very people who can save them. Gray holds greed for money and power to blame for this obstruction. A man by the rather crudely obvious name of J. Gordon Slugg thinks Warbucks is "crazy" to sell eonite to the United States so inexpensively. "Can't he understand that with eonite he controls the world? He can laugh at any nation, any set of rules, any race or creed. If only I had eonite in my hands, I'd make Hannibal, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, all look like precinct captains. I'd be the king, with nearly two billion slaves to do my bidding." (7/9/35) Warbucks cares nothing for accumulating personal power, or even wealth, through eonite. Told that he has lost a fortune when eonite's creator, Eli Eon, is killed, Warbucks, concerned only with his friend's death, exclaims, "Money! What's money!" (8/14/35) Whatever money Warbucks would have made on eonite, he had said, would be shared with his employees. (7/11/35) Ezra Eon points out that "Money's just a tool t'people like Warbucks! A way o' creatin' things that didn't exist before." (7/26/81) Slugg, however, brings in a rabble-rousing union organizer by the name of Claude Claptrap, who accuses Warbucks of a "mad clutching for wealth and power." So it is that Slugg projects his own sins onto the reputation of his opponent.

Starr has dealt with greed for money (in his Medicare fraud story) and for power (in the serial involving K.G.B. agent "Skip Smith") in *ANNIE*, but he did not make it a part of his Eon tale. Instead, he pointed to another human vice that takes a prominent role in Gray's eonite saga: mistrust. At first people refuse to believe that such a miraculous substance as eonite exists, while some regard it merely as a ploy in a "get rich quick scheme" of Warbucks' (7/2/35). The foreign ruler "His Excellency" cannot believe that Warbucks is selling eonite to the United States government for its warmeeds "at no profit to himself." The ruler explodes at his informants: "Idiots!—do you believe such rot? Such blind patriotism is to be found only in fairy tales." Informed that it is indeed all true, His Excellency declares "Then he must be a fool." (7/8/35)

Slugg and Claptrap play on people's tendency to refuse to believe that anyone is out for anybody but himself, in order to convince them that Warbucks is an "octopus" out to control something—eonite—that should belong to one and all. Warbucks' workers remain loyal, but Claptrap's claptrap inflames a mob of ten thousand people into storming and wrecking Warbucks' factory. In the melee Eli Eon, who symbolizes humanity's wisdom and benevolence, is killed and his papers are burned; the secret of eonite is lost forever.

Throughout the disaster, Warbucks retains a nobly idealistic attitude towards even the mob that is destroying


—WHEN BAHGAWEL KICKED OFF, YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW THE CODE!!
—SO WITHOUT KNOWING IT— I'VE BEEN THE KINGPIN— OR IS IT QUEENPIN— OF ORGANIZED CRIME?
LEONARD STARR 9-9

his dream. He refuses to allow any of the members of the mob to be shot, even if the factory is in danger of burning down. "Let them burn it. We can rebuild a plant, but no one can restore a human life. For the time being they're savages driven to outrageous and senseless violence by mountebanks and self-seeking demagogues, but at heart they're our friends and neighbors." (8/10/35) Part of Warbucks' nobility is apparently supposed to lie in his refusal to try to convince the mob of the rightness of his own position. "I'm not a cheap politician," he says, putting an end to that alternative. (8/8/35) Star presumably disagrees with this attitude, for he has Warbucks and Ezra make a case for themselves before their two opponents.

Obviously Gray has no fondness for unions at all, since he makes Clatrap their representative; just leave the benevolent capitalist in charge, he seems to say, and everything will be all right. Gray's attitude towards people in general in this tale hardly seems better. He informs us that Warbucks' workers are not taken in by Claptrap's demagoguery, but the focus is put on the mob. Warbucks continually asserts that the people in the mob are "innocent," and that if Claptrap and company would let them "stop to think," the people's "reason would tell them the truth." (8/7/35) But how high an opinion can we have of people who allow themselves, as Warbucks puts it, "to let a few demagogues do their thinking for them" (8/8/35) and turn them into "savages" (8/10/35)? Claptrap's continual references of "the pee-pul" seem like Gray's own sneering at the citizenry. The members of the mob feel guilty after the destruction of the factory, but soon afterward, they are back listening to Claptrap, who is now turning them against Slugg, who had just tossed him out.

As I have observed before, unfounded trust and mistrust are primary themes of Starr's *ANNIE* (*CF #9*). In this Starr also takes his cue from Gray. For example, in Gray's 1937 Mr. Am sequence, Annie is about to take a swim in a quiet jungle area when Warbucks' aide, the Asp, stops her. He throws a wild pig into the water, and it is immediately seized by an alligator that bursts into view above the water. The Asp observes that "Where all seems most quiet and serene, often danger lurks just below the surface." (4/13/37) The next day Warbucks points out that "City of jungle, either one *can* be safe. It's all a matter of knowing your way around."

In Starr's *ANNIE* "knowing your way around" is particularly difficult. Seeming paragons of virtue, like Skip Smith, Senator Lawfty, and even the "respectable" doctors involved in the Medicare fraud story, turn out to be corrupt and even dangerous. Conversely, forbidding-seeming individuals like Anya Toze, Jed Garr, and Dr. Lixir,

KINGPIN— QUEENPIN— YOU WERE SO GOOD AT IT, YOU PRACTICALLY RUINED THE OTHER CRIME FAMILIES.
OH— WELL, I ALWAYS HAVE TENDED TO BE EFFICIENT—

prove to be kind and noble in their own fashions. Surface appearances can not necessarily be trusted in Starr's *ANNIE*. His Mr. Am and Ezra Eon are not the madmen they at first seem to be. Skip Smith is not an "all-American" youth but a Soviet assassin. The mysterious, bearded, aged "Gray Avenger" out to expose unethical medical practices proves to be either a middle-aged male doctor, or even a young female doctor, in disguise.

Even rational, well-adjusted people like Annie and Warbucks themselves can be and are deceived by appearances in Starr's *ANNIE*. In the Ezra Eon storyline, Starr, like Gray before, him, shows how mistrust can stem from irrational hatred. The theme is set towards the opening of the sequence through the instinctual dislike that Annie's dog Sandy has for a friendly white cat named Caspar. This does not prevent Sandy from rescuing the cat when it falls into danger (5/15/81), but another character in the story acts less nobly. This is mark Pease, who, as his name suggests, mar peace through his fanaticism. His compulsive mistrust of Warbucks o Warbucks prevents him from ever giving Warbucks the benefit of the doubt, or ever recognizing the possibility that the magma project might be as safe and beneficial as Warbucks and Eon claim. "Y'know, son," Eon tells Pease, "I git th'feelin' you'd be disappointed if I did convince you." (7/26/81) Like "His Excellency," Pease is contemptuous of anyone who believes that a man as wealthy and powerful a Warbucks could be guided by high ideals. As if echoing Claptrap, Pease thunders that "With guys like Warbucks, conscience is dictated by greed." (8/4/81) At first Pease's blindness can be comedic, since it leads him to misinterpret Warbucks' every action. Spying on Warbucks, Pease sees him looking upset and surmises through wishful thinking that there "must be some sort of crisis at his project." (6/5/81(In fact, Warbucks is merely growing impatient over waiting for the arrival of his dinner guest. But Pease's irrationality ceases to be funny by the end of the story-line. His compulsive mistrust has already corrupted him by turning him into a skulking spy; it finally leads him to kidnap Annie in order to force Warbucks to undo extensive damage that the latter had unwittingly caused. If Pease was not so confident that he is always right, he would have done some simple research and discovered that Warbucks was already pouring millions into restoring the contaminated land.

Starr's theme of deceiving appearances receives its most disquieting dramatization through his handlingof Mark Pease's sister, Angela, who impresses Annie as being the most beautiful woman she has ever seen; Annie significantly points out that Angela "looks like she just stepped out of a fairy tale." (5/11/81) Angela Pease's name suggests the words "angel"—and, indeed, she always wears white—

YOU'RE NOT GRASPING THIS! THE MOB IS BIGGER THAN MANY COUNTRIES! YOU'RE PROBABLY THE MOST POWERFUL WOMAN ON EARTH!
WOW! AM YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT RE- ENTERING TH' JOB MARKET!

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VERY LIKELY. SINCE THE POLYMER IS SO CHEAP, I TOLD THE ENERGY BUREAU THE PRICE OF OIL SHOULD REVERT TO EIGHT DOLLARS A BARREL ...
...AND THEY DIDN'T JUMP AT IT?
WARBUCKS
...GEE, "DADDY," I GUESS YOU'LL HAVE T'DO IT YOURSELF!
WELL - I REALLY AM TOO BUSY TO PIDDLE AROUND WITH SMALL STUFF LIKE THE OIL BUSINESS, BUT...
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"peace," and even "peas," the last word presumably relating to her interest in growing plants. She has a greenhouse that Annie describes as "a hospital for plants." (5/21/81) So Angela is not just reminiscent of an angel, but also of a healer, a fairy tale heroine, and even a fertility goddess. She and Annie immediately become fast friends. Warbucks falls in love with Angela and is about to propose marriage to her when the awful discovery is made. The spy whom the Asp has just captured turns out to be her brother Mark, and Angela herself has been secretly photographing Warbucks' confidential reports (ones he himself has not yet read) to find proof that his chemical plant in the northeast has contaminated twelve square miles of inhabited terrain. Although Warbucks unhesitatingly acts to undo the damage as soon as he learns of it, even if it costs him his entire fortune, he cannot forgive what he regards as his betrayal by Angela.

Although the strip does not say so directly, it is clear that if Warbucks does indeed spend his entire fortune to restore the land, the magma heat project will have to halt. The Peases are not responsible for the collapse of the project as Slugg and Claptrap were for the end of eonite. The worst that can be said is that Warbucks and his executives should have been aware that the conditions under which they were disposing of chemical waste had changed. Gray makes dishonest and unthinking people the cause of Warbucks' loss of eonite, while Starr ascribes Warbucks' fall to fate. Still, Mark Pease did have a role in causing his suffering over Angela's betrayal, since she was acting in tandem with him, and this, along with his coldness towards Warbucks' problems make Mark as grating as Claptrap was. Angela has light blonde hair and wears only white; Mark, just as significantly, has black hair and a beard, and his costume is dominated by a black shirt. (However, he wears lighter clothes in the next story, in which he no longer acts the villain.)

Starr conjured up the image of a vast conspiracy of the blackest of villains when he dealt with "Skip Smith" and his unseen Soviet masters. As noted, however, whereas Gray brought a paranoid fantasy to life in setting Slugg, with his fantasies of ruling the world, Claptrap, with his caricatured personality, and the mob against Warbucks, Star gives him but two adversaries in this story-line. Moreover, Starr is more understanding towards his "villain" than Gray was. Mark Pease is clearly a fanatic who goes to far in his belief that his end justifies even such means as kidnapping. Moreover, Starr makes it clear that Mark's anger at authority figure Warbucks in part stems from his own unresolved resentment towards his father, a multi-millionaire who uncaringly despoiled the Earth's resources. But Starr gives Mark a good reason to work against Warbucks—the destruction caused by the chemical waste from Warbucks factory—and the fact that Mark's kindly sister Angela joins him in his fight, as well as the fact that Warbucks, once he learns of the disaster, at once acts to reverse it, testifies to the rightness of his cause. Mark is not using his environmentalist concerns to a false front under which to satisfy his own greed and lust for power; Mark's goal is a correct one, and it is only his means and his blind fervor which are questionable.

In the next story-line Mark begins to change a little for the better. He spirits the kidnapped Annie and Sandy onto a boat with which he plans to foil the attempts of whale hunters to kill their prey. One shipload of enraged whalers attacks Mark's boat, and in the course of his flight from them, his boat is wrecked, his captain disappears beneath the waves, and after being pursued by an enormous whale, Mark, Annie, and Sandy find themselves stranded on an island in the middle of the Arctic seas. Mark feels genuinely guilty over the apparent drowning of Cap'n Jack, and over bringing Annie into this situation. Indeed, he never wanted to cause her harm. Towards the end of this story-line Mark sneaks a look at a "log" in which Mr. Am has written his "projection" of what will happen in "the rapid depletion of resources, pollution, overpopulation, the nuclear threat" and so forth continue. Mark is genuinely shaken by this prediction, and although he was as cynical about Mr. Am as he was about Warbucks, this time he is willing to believe him. Mark's resolve to work to prevent the future from being so horrendous seems not so much fanatical as truly courageous. Mr. Am sees him as a man with a "mission" and wishes him luck. Just before departing Mark gives Annie a goodbye hug and thanks Mr. Am, the man he formerly regarded as insane. Mark's adventure in Mr. Am's world appears to have made him more considerably human in a positive manner.

As for Angela, she is no more the unfeeling spy toying with the emotions of others than she was purely an "angel." She feels deeply guilty over her betrayal of Warbucks from the very moment the Asp catches Mark in the act of spying, turns against Mark's fanatical attitudes, and is clearly heartbroken over the end of her romance with Warbucks. After hearing out Warbucks and Eon, she realizes that "we behaved dishonorably

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...I'LL HAVE THOSE OIL-DRENCHED NEIGHBORS OF MINE GROVELING AT MY FEET! FIRST-- WARBUCKS WILL GIVE ME THE "LAZARUS PROCESS" AS RANSOM FOR YOU!
SOUNDS PRETTY SIMPLE, SHEIK...
...AS SIMPLE AS TH' RECIPE FOR TIGER STEW! LET'S SEE ... HOW GOES IT GO?... "FIRST... CATCH A TIGER!..."

...DO I SENSE THAT YOU'D LIKE MAY TO MARRY ME, ANNIE? I COULD SURE USE AN ALLY...
IF THE MOB'S STILL AFTER HER, I'M HOPIN' YOU CAN KEEP HER SAFE, MR. GARR.
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with an honorable man." (8/5/81) Neither angel nor cold-hearted traitress, Angela emerges as a human being who may be more virtuous than most, but whose moral dedication can lead her into making terrible mistakes. Gray's Warbucks thought of the members of the attacking mob as people who were good at heart despite their moral errors. Such an image more aptly applies to Angela. Through her Starr demonstrates that one does not have to be a Slugg, a Claptrap, or even a Mark Pease to cross the line into the wrong in the name of the right: anyone is capable of doing so.

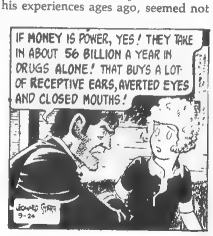
Starr's treatment of Mr. Am proves to be more problematic. Mr. Am is a giant of a man with white hair and a long, white beard, who claims to have been alive at least since the age of the dinosaurs: Annie notes that Mr. Am looks "a lot like Santa Claus" (4/20/37), and perhaps this is why Starr gives him an island retreat near the North Pole. Starr himself has remarked that it has been theorized that Mr. Am is God (*CF #9*) as his name indeed suggests. There may be limits to Mr. Am's abilities: Gray has him claim to be unable to foresee the future, and Starr has him assert that his prediction of disaster for Earth is merely a scientific projection. But the powers that Mr. Am does demonstrate are considerable. Gray reveals Mr. Am's abilities slowly and carefully. His 1937 adventure has Annie, Warbucks, and the Asp secretly going to the jungle where Mr. Am lives to escape Boris Sirob and his gang of "the worst robbers and murderers on Earth" (3/17/37), who are after the gems Warbucks holds, which are worth ten billion dollars. Am displays no powers until Sirob catches up with Warbucks and the Asp and leaves them apparently dead from being shot with "at least fifty bullets" and suffering from "great knife wounds." Am saves both, seemingly through phenomenal medical skill, although there must be far more to their obvious resurrections than that. Am then tricks Sirob and company into opening a chest which releases a substance that turns them all into monkeys. Am apparently needed the chest to work this feat, but next, once he, Warbucks, Annie, and the Asp have returned to the United States, he makes a baby elephant appear out of thin air (6/18/37). Annie is of course amazed, but Mr. Am protests that he merely created a magician's illusion. Well, the elephant could hardly have been concealed up his sleeve! The people of the city finally put Mr. Am on trial in their belief that his claims to have been alive for millions of years are merely the ravings of a madman. Now Gray has him work a miracle without any props or excuses: in the middle of the packed courtroom, Mr. Am simply vanishes into thin air.

Instead of giving Mr. Am a slow buildup, Starr has him work a whole set of miracles right from the time he enters the story. He makes a group of sinister whalers pursuing Annie disappear

before her eyes (9/24/81) into what he claims is another dimension (10/23/81). It is astonishing enough that Mr. Am's new retreat is a tropical island in the middle of the Arctic Ocean; Am asserts that he controls the weather there (10/11/81). Equally amazingly, he has a live pterodactyl and knows Mark Pease's name without being told (10/5/81). He makes a huge dinner for three appear right before Annie's eyes (10/8/81). It could be argued that the whale Moby, which Am claims to control, forced the raft of the shipwrecked Annie and Pease onto Am's island by coincidence rather than at Am's bidding. But if Am cannot communicate with the whale, then how did he know it had chased the other whalers there too before Am saw them (10/21/81)? There may be nothing miraculous about Mr. Am's rescue of the supposedly drowned Cap'n Jack, and then again, there may be. Am seemingly communicates with the whalers through telepathy (11/4-5/81) and indisputably creates an impenetrable force field to protect himself from them (11/3/81). He himself vanishes, as in the Gray story, to reappear behind his attackers (11/1/81). Many of these feats that Starr's Am performs seem less supernatural than science-fictional, perhaps accomplished through telepathy, teleportation, and mind-over-matter abilities.

Gray had the public think Am a madman; Starr continues the theme by having Mark Pease take the same opinion towards him. It is the measure of Pease's narrow-minded certainty in his own views of the world that, just as he refused to believe in Warbucks' honesty and benevolence, so too Pease refuses to believe in the miracles he sees all about him in his encounter with Mr. Am. Wrongly, Starr even extends this disbelief to Annie, who begins speaking of "Mr. Am's delusions" (11/16/81). Just before Am finally proves his powers beyond question by returning Annie to Warbucks' mansion after an apparently magical voyage on a seeming derelict of an ocean liner through a fog, Annie is on the verge of losing her faith in him: "Maybe Mark is right, Sandy. Mr. Am may just be a crazy old geezer. . . ." (11/29/81) The point may be that a man like Pease can infect even people like Annie with his distrust, yet Annie has always seemed someone who accepts the truth. Moreover, even restricting this discussion to Starr's own *ANNIE* stories, Annie knows that "magic" can be real: she has witnessed Punjab using his cloak to transport himself and Warbucks into another dimension. Finally, Annie not only saw Mr. Am work his wonders in the Gray story but, unlike Pease, saw him make the banquet appear from nowhere. Surely that feat cannot simply be explained away as a coincidence or an unusual natural phenomenon. To be blunt, having Annie doubt Mr. Am's powers and claims makes her look uncharacteristically stupid.

Gray's Mr. Am, despite his stories of his experiences ages ago, seemed not at


IF MONEY IS POWER, YES! THEY TAKE IN ABOUT 56 BILLION A YEAR IN DRUGS ALONE! THAT BUYS A LOT OF RECEPTIVE EARS, AVERTED EYES AND CLOSED MOUTHS!
HOWARD GRAY 9-24

...WELL, IF YOU DON'T LIKE A POLITICIAN, DON'T VOTE FOR HIM, MRS. SCRUBBS!
I NEVER VOTE FOR ANY POLITICIANS!
LEONARD STARR
THAT SURE MUST LIMIT YOUR CHOICE!
OH, I ONCE VOTED FOR A GUY WHO WAS NEVER IN POLITICS—BUT THE SECOND HE GOT ELECTED-BINGO!—HE TURNED INTO A POLITICIAN!
...WELL, NATURALLY! WHEN ELECTED TO POLITICAL OFFICE YOU'RE AUTOMATICALLY A POLITICIAN!
AHA! SEE— THAT'S HOW THEY GET YOU!

all crazy but rather, in Warbucks' words, "the wisest man I've ever known" (4/19/81). Gray's point, like George Bernard Shaw's in *BACK TO METHUSELAH*, was that Mr. Am's long life had given him a kind of wisdom that normal humans, thinking they had found the truth within their shorter life spans, did not achieve. Forever laughing, Mr. Am was continually amused by people's absolute confidence in the ideas of their own age.

ANNIE: But—but people *today* know what is right and what is wrong! Folks today follow *laws!*
MR. AM: Ha! Ha! The law is only public opinion, Annie—what is "right" may have been "wrong" a hundred years ago, and soon may be "wrong" again. *Ideas* change, like changing tides—that's what makes so-called progress—but *people*? As long as I've lived, they've never changed.

Starr continues this theme in his own way. His Mr. Am finds himself in basic agreement with Pease's goals concerning the environment, but sadly puzzled by his "frenzy" over it (11/24/81). However, rather than seeming a fount of wisdom, Starr's Am usually came over as an eccentric whose insights were delivered casually and might well have simply been the result of quirky thinking. Perhaps this characterization was designed by Starr to make Pease's and Annie's suspicions of him more credible. It might also have been a pose that Mr. Am chose to assume, as we shall see. Nevertheless, though it might be mildly humorous to show Mr. Am misremembering what year it is because his watch is running slow, such a figure is nowhere near as impressive as the godly mentor Gray presented.

Another major difference between Gray's and Starr's handling of the character comes in his attitude towards humanity. Gray's Am might be described as a benevolent fascist. He prefers to use thousands of men to perform tasks that machines could fulfill. "Here only the real worker reaps the fruits of his toil," boasts Am. "My men work for me voluntarily—they are well fed and kept safely and in security." (5/5/37) We are meant to admire Am's system, but nevertheless Am's workers are not paid and presumably have no means of advancing themselves. They are in effect slaves. Am transforms Sirob and his men into apes, arguing that "they'll be quite happy here in the forest" (5/31/37). Their fate is still horrifying, even for people as vile as they. After Am resurrects Warbucks, Annie tells her "daddy" that "Mr. Am told me that in millions o'years he's known only three or four men he figgered were worth savin'—He said you were one of 'em—said he saved th'Asp just for practice." (5/25/37) This is hardly a man brimming with kindness towards other people, and he goes too far even for Gray.

AM: Someday, Oliver, you'll learn that the best way to get hated is to try to do too big a good turn. People want to do things for themselves. . . .
WARBUCKS: You're cynical, Am. I still have a few pleasant illusions.
AM: . . . Since time began it's been "every man for himself"—and better so. . . .
WARBUCKS: True enough—but a better world, just the same, for a few who thought and *worked* for *others*—(6/23/37)

Gary's Am has decidedly become less cynical in a wartime Sunday strip in which he congratulates Warbucks for his selfless efforts in producing munitions for the free world's armed forces.

Starr's Am has no slaves except animals, and does virtually everything himself. The worst that he does to the savage whalers is to transport them to that other dimension. Just as Gray's Am allowed Sirob and his gang to turn themselves into apes by opening the chest through "their own human weaknesses—which are "greed and curiousity" (5/28-29/37), Starr's Am allows the rest of the whalers to choose an appropriate but far less inhumane fate for themselves out of their own greed. He lets them keep a fabulous treasure as long as they do not take it from the island. By accepting his offer, the whalers sentence themselves to a lifetime of squabbling over the gold out of their distrust of one another—Starr's favorite theme again—but being unable to spend it. This story device unfortunately deprives the sequence of a dramatic climax. It is hard to believe that the whalers are stupid enough to take the gold on those terms. Readers surely expected the whalers to make more attempts on the lives of the other characters and receive a harsher fate than the one they received. Starr builds the whalers up as a menace, sets them on the same island as characters the readers care for, and then lets this promising dramatic situation fade away. Annie's stories are basically melodramatic in nature, but often Starr forgets to provide sufficiently dramatic payoffs in his story-lines for this strip.

In sharp contrast to the Gray story, here Mr. Am rescues as "unimportant" a man as Cap'n Jack. Starr's Am seems to care about everyone. It is very important to note that while Am belittles Pease's concern for the environment at first, by the story's end it is clear that Am is very concerned about the various dangers besetting Earth—"the rapid depletion of resources, pollution, overpopulation, nuclear threat, etc." (11/26/81)—as well. The cynicism Gray gave Mr. Am has been transformed by Starr into a sad pessimism that Earth cannot be saved. Nevertheless, though he tells Pease "I'm afraid you underestimate your mission," he wishes him "god luck" in going off to prevent Earth's doom from becoming inevitable. (11/29/81) One wonders whether Mr. Am knew

that Pease would sneak a look at the "log" containing the prediction of Earth's doom and knew that it would inspire him to work to prevent it. It is obvious that Am took Mark's concerns more seriously than he had let on earlier. Moreover, Am kept various secrets from Annie and Pease until he judged the time to be right: he did not tell them he made some whalers vanish, or was bringing the others to the island, or that he had saved Cap'n Jack. Finally, in his last talks with Pease and Annie, Mr. Am no longer seems the eccentric but instead is clearly a wise, fatherly being. Starr's Mr. Am apparently, then, plays "games" with people in order to change them in desirable ways (as with Pease) or arrange appropriate fates for them (as with the whalers and with Cap'n Jack, who gets to spend his last years happily in Am's tropical paradise).

Who in literature does Mr. Am resemble, then? Those with long memories may recall that Starr constructed a story-line in his previous strip, *ON STAGE*, around the making of a film of Shakespeare's *THE TEMPEST*. The parallels between Prospero, the sorcerer of that play, and Starr's Mr. Am are numerous. Both have "supernatural" powers, Prospero has an "air spirit" Ariel and a bestial "fishlike" servant Caliban; Mr. Am has a winged pterodactyl and a sometimes hot-tempered whale. Both men live on island paradises. Prospero was shipwrecked on his island, and, due to the presense of a stranded ocean liner, Mark Pease thinks Mr. Am is also a shipwreck victim. Shipwrecks and forces of nature (a storm in *THE TEMPEST*, a whirlpool in *ANNIE*) maroon others on the island. Prospero and Mr. Am both materialize banquets from thin air, and both leave trails of valuable objects to tempt greedy visitors to their islands. Both resurrect "drowned sailors" and both are dedicated to creating a just but merciful fate for everyone on their islands. Prospero and Am each have a fatherly relationship towards a young girl. As my editors have pointed out to me, Prospero and Mr. Am each also take a young man under their tutelage (Ferdinand and Mark), and both *THE TEMPEST* and this *ANNIE* sequence end with a ship being restored and a voyage home. In modeling his version of Mr. Am on Prospero, Starr may have created a less imposing figure than Gray's, but also a far more humane one.

BUT THERE'S NO TELLING HOW MUCH THE LITTLE FIEND HAS GUESSED- SHE IS FOREVER FLAUNTING IT IN MY FACE- I DARE NOT REFUSE HER ANYTHING-
WHY, IF IT EVER BECAME KNOWN THAT I AM THE ONE WHO RAN OVER PETE PINCHER'S BOY, I'D BE RUINED- AND SHE HAS THE EVIDENCE TO PROVE IT-
OH, HELLO, MR. PINCHPENNY- I WAS JUST THINKIN', AS LONG AS YOU'RE DOIN' SO MUCH FIXIN' UP ON TH' CHURCH, IT'D BE NICE TO PAINT TH' PREACHER'S HOUSE, TOO-
ULP! WHAT'S THAT? WHY-- I-- ER-- THAT IS---
SHUX- IT'D ONLY COST A COUPLE O' HUNDRED BUCKS- I KNEW YOU'D BE GLAD TO DO IT-
HA! HA! OH, QUITE SO, ANNIE- YES- YES INDEED- THAT'S A S-S-S-SPLENDID IDEA-
HAROLD GRAY ®

LETTERS

Rick Norwood:
-Warm words...
-Gratefully received.

Cordially,
MILTON Caniff
Palm Springs, Ca.

Dear People:

I can't find a letter column in **Comics Feature #17**, so I don't know whether this letter will ever see print, but I'll write it anyway and perhaps you'll find some way to accommodate.

Many thanks for publishing Dennis Perado's review of my **X-Men Index**. It was a hell of a lot of work and I'm glad it's appreciated. I must admit that some of the cover credits were botched, particularly in the #17-50 range, many for reasons that I don't fully understand myself, since the correct credits are obvious even to me. (For example, #17 is unquestionably pencilled by Jack Kirby, while the penciller of #64 is Sal Buscema, not Don Heck, etc.) I think it might be because they were copied from an old list littered with errors, but that's no excuse for perpetuating them. They will be corrected in the revised **X-Men Index** a couple of years down the pike.

On the other hand, I did check **X-Men#10** to see whether Claremont and Byrne committed a **faux pas** as Dennis describes. Well, it turns out that Cyclops was **not** miles away from Jean when she was being threatened by the tyrannosaur; he was with a group comprising the Beast, Iceman, and Ka-Zar, and well aware of the danger that Jean and the Angel happened to be in. While the Angel stalled the tyrannosaur and helped Jean keep out of its reach (Jean even called him "Scott" once by mistake, by the way), the rescuers were arranging a stampede to break into the Swamp Men's city where the two captives were held. At the conclusion of the episode in #10, after Scott(according to #138) realized that he was in love with her, Jean even noticed the emotion in Scott's voice (check panel 3 page 19 of **X-Men#10**). There is nothing inconsistent in #38 with the events in #10 that cannot be explained by Scott having to compress his reminiscences of that time into the caption of one panel.

"Candy Sothern" is the way Warren's girlfriend's name was originally spelled, a name that is an obvious reference to the novel **Candy** by Terry Sothern, then a hot number among the college students (like me). If the last name is rewritten "Southern," then it loses some of its raison d'etre and becomes less interesting. This is why I harp on it a lot in the book.

As told in #138, Scott and Jean found one another after Bobby Drake's 18th birthday party in **X-Men#32**. I looked through #34 several times to locate Scott worrying about Jean's relationship with Ted Roberts, but could only find places where he's worried about Ted possibly knowing the identities of the X-Men. Very few thought balloons in the issues following #32 flatly contradict the notion that Scott and Jean have made their love for one another known by then (I could find none, but I didn't read **everything**), while a single declaration of love certainly does not demand a complete change in Scott's and Jean's relationship. This is particularly true in view of the obious stress the characters were under in the episodes that followed (with Factor Three always in the background). Once that period was finished, with the "death" of Professor X, their love had a chance to grow and develop further, and in the issues following #46 it did.

I reserve the right to editorialize just a bit (it is my book, after all), when I feel the situation warrants it. I enjoyed the Claremont/Byrne stories immensely, and I feel that someone reading the synopsis without having read the entire set of **X-Men** first would probably want to begin there before pursuing the remainder of the collection. I am surprised that Dennis didn't take me to task for my more extensive editorializing--which was not uniformly favorable--in the Ghost Rider synopsis, which was rather less defensible. Reading and indexing thirty-odd **Ghost Rider** issues all of which were pretty much alike just got to me. I certainly would not want to turn anybody off the comic sight unseen, but a fair warning about what to expect seemed in order.

Continuity implants are no more difficult to deal with than are ordinary crossovers. Their success or failure depends more heavily on how well the writer has done his homework. In the case of the **Rampaging Hulk** stories, it is regrettable that it was decided to do away with them so soon after the **X-Men Index** was published, but that's what revised editions are for. Actually, I was rather relieved to learn that those stories were just manufactured for entertainment on Beneet's home planet, because a fair number of thorny contradictions vanish. But the chronologies of the Hulk, the Avengers, the Sub-Mariner, and the X-Men had all been bent to accommodate those implants; to unbend them so abruptly is perhaps almost as bad as implanting them was in the first place. And what does this bode for the future? Will other chunks of Marvel history be similarly dis-Mantlo-ed when it becomes inconvenient to retain them?

Finally, Dennis notes that he assumes that the events in the new series of X-Men stories take place without relation to the old stories, as if there existed a DC-like Earth-One-Earth-Two situation. This is completely incorrect, because there is a clear and strong continuity in the X-Men stories that runs from #1 to date. The problem is simply one of **time**: it is difficult to reconcile stories nearly twenty years old with the evident youth of the characters in today's comics. I have worked on the problem a bit, and I believe I have worked out a solution that describes the flow of time in the Marvel Universe relative to the flow of time on Earth-Real fairly adequately--well enough to avoid flagrant contradictions and absurdities like Spider-Man spending eleven years in college before getting his degree. This system will be described fully in the revised index to **Spider-Man**, which is now being compiled and will be the next volume in

the **Marvel Comics Index**.
Sincerely yours,
George Olshevsky
San Diego, Ca.

Dear Comics Feature:

Just a line to thank you for picking up Jim Korkis as a columnist, and to thank Jim for the lovely plug he gave to **Apatoons**, the world's first and [thus far] only amateur press association devoted to discussion of animation.

As you may know, but the majority of your readers probably don't, amateur press associations [apas] are a form of communication dating back to the last century. They started when proliferation of small letterpresses made it possible for many home publishers to produce their own publications without having to worry about editorial approval, funding, or any of the obstacles faced by those of us who pursue self-expression through regular channels.

The outward form of apas has changed through the years, with the invention of ditto, mimeo and office copiers opening them up for more and more people. Today, there are a few apas that are produced and distributed through computer nets, opening the form up for more people yet. This new development will undoubtedly transform apas outwardly, but the basis—personal communication—will never change.

In an age when even fanzines devoted to a once-despised art form are typeset, professionally printed, and available over-the-counter in stores in every major city, apas still thrive as a medium for an individual without the resources to compete for a mass audience. As a matter of fact, they're more popular than ever, with over 100 currently active and more starting up every year.

How it works is this: members print their own contributions without fear of censorship or editorial interference. they send a set number of copies [enough to cover the whole membership, with a few left over] to the person in charge. On a set date, that person [called an "official editor", "central mailer" or something else—it varies from apa to apa] assembles all the contributions into bundles of one copy each, and mails a bundle to each member. In the next mailing, the members comment on each contribution, effectively creating a many-faceted in-print conversation.

It's not for everyone, but those who do enjoy it, enjoy it a great deal. I've been personally involved in a couple of dozen apas since I joined my first in 1968, and expect to stay involved, at one level or another, as long as I live.

Apatoons was started last year when GiGi Dane and I took it into our heads that the world was ready for one devoted entirely to animation. Apas devoted specifically to comics have existed since Jerry Bails founded **Capa-alpha** in 1964; and several exist today. Back then, a burning topic in comics fandom was whether it was a branch of science fiction fandom, or a seperate fan movement. The success of **Capa-alpha** was a large factor in settling that question.

Similarly, people are now beginning to ask if animation fandom is really just a branch of comics fandom or a separate thing in its own right. I think in years to come, the success of **Apatoons** will be regarded as one of the factors that helped answer that question.

We just celebrated our first anniversary with a solid, 139 page mailing. There are still a few open spots on the roster [a situation we expect to change fairly soon], so if anybody is interested in joining, 30 copies of a cartoon-oriented zine will get him in.

Quack,
Don Markstein, co-Fearless Leader
Phoenix, Az.

[We are also quite happy to have Jim aboard! Many of our writers and columnists have been and continue to be involved with various apas. I sincerely recomend it as a very worthwhile experience to any of our readers so inclined. As to animation itself, stay tuned to NMP for an announcement concerning a certain upcoming title, to begin release early next year, and which will definitely involve Jim.]

Dear People;

Generally speaking it is not my policy to address any response to reviews of my work in the Fan Press, mostly since doing so is like as not to be interpreted in some quarters as attempted self-justification. However, since Dennis Perado, in his review of my **Fantastic Four** in your June issue addressed several points directly to me, response, in this instance, seems warranted.

First off, without wishing to seem sarcastic, may I say that I have been waiting for some kind of definitive over-view of my first year as creative team on the **Fantastic Four**, and as of this writing I'm sorry to say I'm still waiting. Dennis, I fear makes far too many of the all too familiar errors of Fan reviewers, and thus very nearly negates what valid points he might have in his critique. Why, oh why, for example, must we forever read reviews by Fan writers who are not content simply to say "I can't imagine why so-and-so did this," but who must instead flaunt their "inside" knowledge, and thus perhaps impress less informed readers, but generally embaress those of us who **really** know.

Case in point; there was no John Romita redrawing of Frankie Raye in issue #238, or any other issue. Dennis is obviously aware that Romita has redrawn faces here and there in the past, but this is not such an instance. Romita has not, in fact, redrawn anything of mine since **Iron Fist #3**. He has, however, influenced considerably my portrayal of the female face. Dennis would be advised to apply Occam's Razor and look for this obviously simpler solution to the question as he percieves it.

Further, as to the matter of Frankie's parenthood, although it is well known in Fan circles that Toro was originally intended to have been her father, you will find **absolutely no evidence** of that within the comics themselves. I was, myself, not opposed to this concept [as Dennis suggests] but felt that, if I was going to function as a writer, it was my responsibility to create new and different concepts, and not obediently parrot those set down by whoever happened to be writer on a title two or three years before me. Remember, Dennis, if it isn't said in the comic, it isn't real. And sometime it's not even real then!

Dennis also commits what is, to me, an unforgivable sin for anyone professing to be a qualified reviewer: he quotes from memory, and he quotes **incorrectly.** In the sequence to which he refers, in the Baxter

Building in issue #237, Sue does **not** say "Oops, sorry Alicia. I keep forgetting you're blind." This would, indeed, be graceless, as Dennis suggests. However, he is mixing up the dialog from two separate and distinct incidents, in two separate issues. In #237 Sue says: "Don't worry, Alicia, I haven't forgotten you're blind." And in #238 Ben says "You get around so well sometimes I forget you're blind." These are both, by my definition, tactfully handled, and infinitely preferrable to Dennis's suggested footnote ("Alicia is the Thing's girl-friend, she is blind, and the step-daughter of the Puppet Master".) which is clumsy, unnatural, and pulls the reader out of the story. And one of the first laws of writting is that the reader must never be artificially distracted from the flow of the story. A footnote, to me, functions in the same manner as would a freeze-frame/voice-over in a movie, distracting and unnecessery.

Dennis also suffers from the I-know-it-says-this-in-the-story-but-I'm-going-to-ignore-it-because-it-will-make-my-review-better syndrome. He attacks the basic premis of "Wendy's Friends" because he says he cannot believe the "cute little beasties" could frighten people to death. Oh, he does make casual mention of the fact that it is stated **in the story** that this was in fact **not** the cause of the deaths, but he dismisses this, seemingly determined to miss the point. And, in the same issue, am I truly to believe Dennis thinks the Margaret Rutherford appearance is what was touted on the cover as the "Most Unexpected Guest Star of All Time"? You sure this couldn't, just possibly, have applied to Aunt Petunia, Dennis?

So, thanks for the **attempted** overview, Dennis, but next time try being a little less "fannish" and a little more professional, and this applies to the sweeping praises of the review, too, which in most cases were just so biased and unsatisfying as the criticisms. And if you really want to carry weight, especially with Professionals, don't blythely suggest that anything done by the creative teams since Stan and Jack (including myself) has **surpassed** those first hundred-odd issues. Some few stories may have approached equality, but **never** surpassed.

Regards
John Byrne

Hi Robert-

I appreciate the nice job you and Peter Senderson did with the interview. Your apologies are accepted, re: the misspelling of my name. My name is often misspelled, but it's usually Allan that gets mangled- you, at least, found a new way to do it with "Colins."

Thanks for your support and interest. I hope you'll continue to cover **Tracy**, **Ms. Tree** and my mystery novels in your pages.

All the best to **COMIX FEECHUR**-
Macks Collins
(just kidding—)

The Editors:

I am writing in reference to a painting by Hannah Shapero, of Marion Zimmer Bradley's character 'Sharra', which appears on page 53 of this month's[#17, June] **Comics Feature**.

I was struck by this painting's similarity to the English artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 1870 work entitled 'La Donna della Fiamma' [The Lady of the Blaze/Flame...].

I'm certain that I was not alone in noticing this and would be interested in having Ms. Shapero comment upon it.

I am enclosing a xerox of 'la Donna della Fiamma' which I have taken from the 1973 St. Martin's Press publication **'D.C. Rossetti'** by Martin Henderson

Sincerely Yours,
Linda Albelo
Queens, NY

(This letter is being passed on to Hannah for comment. We will print her response upon receipt.)

THE POSITIVE APPROACH

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NEW MEDIA PUBLISHING, INC.

SEPTEMBER SHIPPING

THE LEADING BRITISH COMICS FANZINE COMES TO AMERICA!

THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMICS #1 EDITOR:Don Thompson

A LOOK AT CAPTAIN MARVEL-A fond look back at the great years of this highly popular character.

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BEM #36 EDITOR:Martin Lock

THE HEROES OF 2000 A.D.-A long piece on all of the 2000 A.D. series, illustrated with original art and cover*reproductions. 2000 A.D. is the leading adventure comics magazine in England.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ARTHUR RANSON-One of England's leading comic book artists talks about comics.

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AN OVERVIEW OF ROGUE TROOPER-A very popular British comic series gets its due in the Made in Britian column.

PLUS COLUMNS, LETTES, REVIEWS, NEWS, AND MUCH MORE.

COMIC FANDOM'S FORUM #10 EDITOR:Robert Lewis

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD COMELY-This interview, postponed from the previous issue, takes a look at the work of one of the more interesting forces in the alternative publishing market. First he created the only newsstand comic book to be launched in the past five years and now he is back with a combination graphic magazine and political platform, Starriders and the Peace Machine.

HOWARD CHAYKIN TALKS ABOUT HOW TO DRAW-One of our most popular fantasy and comic book artist talks about how he draws and what tools he uses to tell a story.

GREEN LANTERN, PART THREE-This analysis, which has already drawn the attention of writer Denny O'Neil, continues to cover the recent run of Green Lantern comics.

THE MARVEL CHRONOLOGY-Chuck Huber begins his series on the exact birth date of every character in the Marvel Universe. No Marvel completist will want to be without this timeline and authoritative and lengthy piece which includes complete explanations of each date given.

The continuing adventures of Spanky, Space Cadet, Fandom Showcase, and Fandom Forum complete the issue.

COMICS FEATURE #21 EDITOR:Robert Lewis

FEATURE NEWS-All the latest plus a preview interview with Walt Simonson on his upcoming Marvel Graphic Novel, The Starslammers, and our exclusive People-In-The-News.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DON HECK-The artist who continues to bring the Justice League to new sales heights talks about his long and varied career. Heavily illustrated with examples of his work including samples of his new Roulette series, a new heroine co-created by Steve Englehart.

THE JLA INDEX PREVIEW-The first DC INDEX leads off with an in-depth article on the Justice League of America, what it is and why it came to be. Here we preview this article prior to the publication of the index.

ONCE MORE WITH FRELENG-Peter Sanderson talks about the works of one of our greatest animators.

THE GREENING OF AMERICA-Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams created one of the heights of modern comics on a brief run of Green Lantern/Green Arrow stories. Here Margaret O'Connell examines them.

TALKING WITH JAY DISBROW-One of the L.B. Cole stable of science fiction artists tells what it was like back then and why there is now a revival of interest in the work they were doing.

THE MARVEL TEAMS OF THE 70S-One of the more prolific periods for the super-team in comics was at Marvel in the last decade. Murray Ward examines the good, the bad, and the ugly.

PLUS the Fandom Zone, JIM KORKIS on animation, JOEL THINGVALL on the media, and RICK NORWOOD on comic strips.

A SPECTACULAR COVER BY DON HECK FEATURING A PREVIEW OF THE UPCOMING MEETING OF THE JLA AND THE AVENGERS.

COMICS FEATURE

The GOLDEN AGE of COMICS

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